READ ANY GOOD SCREENS LATELY? CHECK OUT TEMPEST, THE NEW UNDETECTABLE EAVESDROPPING DEVICE, PAGE 42

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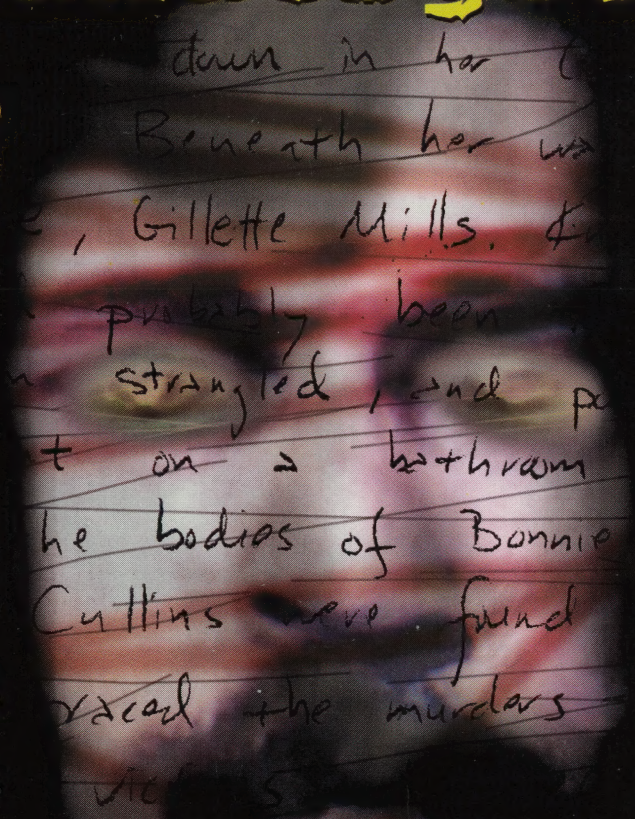

Trivial Pursuits:

The FBI's wasteful hunts for harmless hackers

DEAD MAN TALKING

Freedom of Speech vs. Victims' Rights

A Sendai Media Group Periodical

JUNE 1996 • ISSUE 7

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IU's guide to all things amusing, entertaining, irritating, shocking and a lot of other words that end with the -ing suffix. Remember, if it isn't in the WebGuide, well... then, it isn't in there.

Don't Type That URL!

Sick of entering all those hyperlink addresses? We thought so. Find all the URLs mentioned in this issue, ready for the linking, at **the underground online**
http://www.underground-online.com/

Cover Illustration by Pat Sandberg and Tom DeMay

IUVolumeOneIssue7:thedarkissue

This image cannot be found elsewhere in the magazine.

inside the underground

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departments

PUBLISHER
Steve Harris

EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Joe Funk
joefunk@msn.com

EDITOR
Kathleen Flinn
katflinn@mcs.com

MANAGING EDITOR
Alex S. Gordon
asg@mcs.com

NEWS EDITOR
Rob Bernstein
rib@mcs.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Sarah K. Ellerman
ske@mcs.com

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Lauren Gonzalez
webguide@mcs.com

EDITOR-AT-LARGE
Simson Garfinkel
simsong@vineyard.net

WRITER-AT-LARGE
Justin Ware
jlware@mcs.com

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
David Allen, Bob King, Greg Grabianski,
Eric Snider, Mirsky, Mike Stokes

ART & DESIGN DIRECTOR
Tom DeMay Jr.

ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR
Jane F. Moertl

WEBMASTER
Troy Brophy
webman@mcs.com

Design Assistance:
Pat Sandberg, Mike Stassus,
Jim Cordano, Donna O'Hara
and Mark Monday

PRODUCTION
John Born, Production Coordinator
Dave McCracken, Production Manager
Jennifer Whitesides, Managing Copy Editor
Dan Peluso, Jim Caswell, Copy Editors
Mike Darling, Ad Coordinator

CUSTOMER SERVICE
(708) 268-2498 (M-F, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. CST)

ADVERTISING
Eisenberg Communications Group, Inc.
20700 Ventura Blvd., Suite 205
Woodland Hills, CA 91364 (818) 712-9400
e-mail: iu@eisenberg.com
Jeffrey Eisenberg, National Advertising Director
Jon Yoffie, National Advertising Manager
Elaine Zimmerman, Advertising Coordinator
NY Office: (212) 984-0730
Michele Citrin, Account Executive

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Steve Harris,
PRESIDENT
Mike Riley,
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EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
Marc Camron,
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Jack Copley,
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PUBLICITY MANAGER

Harvey Wasserman,
NEWSSTAND DIRECTOR;
Peter Walsh,
NEWSSTAND MANAGER,
ADS PUBLISHER SERVICE, INC.
John Stanford,
MANUFACTURING DIRECTOR,
STANFORD CONSULTING, INC.

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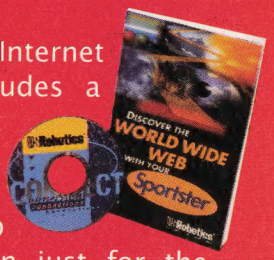

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Contributors

"Dispatches from Death Row" writer **Steve Knopper,** who used to go by the name "Jake Brown" when he was dialing up nerdy hacker bulletin boards in high school, just quit his newspaper job to free-lance full time. Knopper lives in Chicago and has written for *Rolling Stone*, *Newsday*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Request*, *Billboard* and the *Rocky Mountain News*. He has never been incarcerated, though once he had to pay $50 for urinating in public. Knopps@suba.com

Crystal Waters, ("Site Spoofing") is propagator of typo.com and former features editor of *The Net*. She's also done time (in various capacities) at *Computer Life*, *ZiffNet/Mac*, *MacHome Journal* and *Home Office Computing*. She also teaches Web publishing at the San Francisco Digital Media Cente, and is currently working on her first book, on Web concept and design for New Riders. Other professional kudos include winning the 1986 Miss Vermont Photogenic Contest and waiting tables at the Trapp Family Lodge. She's also been a nanny, cook, forestry trainee, girl scout and cheerleader, all of which make her highly qualified to criticize other people's web sites. Cwaters@typo.com

Beth Rosenberg should be pretty well into her first pregnancy by the time this issue hits the stands. But don't worry. Her story this month ("Mad User Disease") required no virtual heavy lifting. Rosenberg's wrote about religion on the 'net for our April issue. beth@vineyard.net

Editor **Kathleen Flinn** ("Assassination of Characters") is "interested in anything that's ever been the subject of an *X-Files* episode" says managing editor Alex Gordon. In past issues, Flinn has written about faked murders, vampires, the Roswell alien autopsy and every installment of Kook du Jour. She has worked as a correspondent for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and as a staffer at *Adweek* and the *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, where she was best known for throwing a tasteless "dead celebrity" costume party. Her work has appeared in such widely diverse publications as *Playboy*, *Men's Fitness*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *Bass! Your Guide To Florida Fishing*. katflinn@mcs.net

Bob King still works for the *Herald-Tribune* (he came as another well-known dead president, Richard Nixon, to the costume party). King worked on this month's story ("Web of Deceit") while juggling coverage of the Florida legislature. Writing about hoaxes, scams, lies and other low points of human nature, King wasn't always sure which he was working on at times, given nefarious nature of southern politics. King's wrote our February cover story, "Watching the Digital Detectives." bking@gate.net

Illustrator **Greg Spalenka** ("Dispatches from Death Row") has had his work featured in numerous publications, including *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Playboy* and *The New Yorker* to name a few. He has also been the subject of articles in *Print*, *Step by Step Graphics*, *Grafica*, and *Illustration* magazines, and has received Gold Medals from the Society of Illustrators in New York and Los Angeles. He is currently teaching Illustration at the Art Institute of Southern California, and consistently reminds our art staff of how much nicer the weather is in California than in Lombard.

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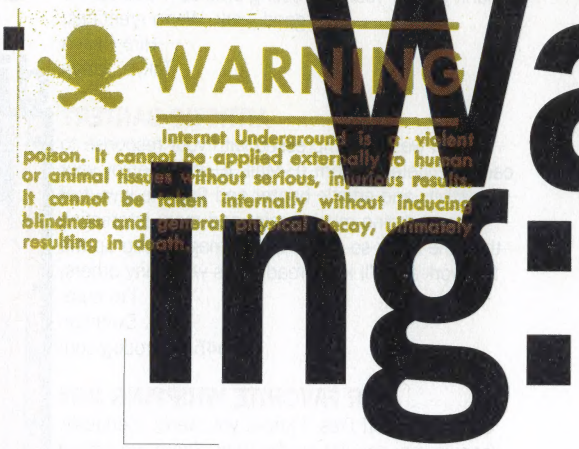


Hyperlink

What a wicked web we weave when we begin to deceive...

This is a dark issue. Indeed, so gloomy that our normally happy-go-lucky server crashed right before deadline (taking the whole issue with it). As we put the issue back together, we carefully added a light parody story. From there, it seemed all right.

But do not be afraid; we are simply trolling for the more sinful aspects of the mortal psyche.

After all, we all live with a few sins on our karmic scorecard. The lie we told our mother about breaking the neighbor's window when we were 14, the time we sneaked into a second movie without paying or the passionate night we cheated on a lover only to horribly regret it the next day.

We trick, we cheat, we lie, we steal, sometimes out of nothing more than a simple need for otherwise harmless rebellion. Why? Because we're all imprisoned by human nature. Of course, some of us are imprisoned *because* of human nature, too.

Take Dean Carter, for example. Dean isn't a nice guy. He brutally murdered four women, casting aside their honest lives and good-natured souls on an impulse. Now he sits in San Quentin, fitfully typing about his daily existence in a small cell on the edge of death row. He mails it to a DJ who posts it on the Web. His chronicles of incarceration bring up questions about this technology that gives everyone a voice. Namely, do his complaints about the cold bunk on which he sleeps and near-celebrity status mock the suffering he caused his victims' relatives? The parents of one woman who died at his hands thinks so. And so the ethical tug of war begins. Free speech vs. victims' rights. Who should win?

In our misdeeds there is always one truth - some are worse than others. Obviously, it's worse to kill a woman than it is to post a fake camera in a bathroom. Deception, regardless of the motive, has always existed in society and so it has also manifested itself in the ether. From the Good Times virus hoax to the Make Money Fast scams, *IU* explains why the Internet offers fertile ground for those who would like to make you believe in something that isn't true. Sometimes it works in this communication system lacking the filter of editors to determine what really **should be broadcast.**

That same missing safety net allows for all kinds of "proof" to be published online. Nothing exemplifies this more than the conspiracy theorists who just love to post huge files of sometimes crazy and occasionally plausible data on the 'net. We took a look at the opposing views on the JFK assassination, arguably the subject of the most intense speculation and disbelief in official findings of the 20th Century. (Oh, all right, the possible crash of an alien aircraft in Roswell, N.M., in the 1940s is right up there with it). If there wasn't some deception in the first place, then there couldn't be a conspiracy to cover up the truth **now, could there?**

That brings up a common denominator in the typical conspiracy—the government. The government may have covered up the assassination of a president and the discovery of alien. Now it seems awfully reticent to provide any information on a scary new technology for covert electronic eavesdropping. It's so hush-hush, it doesn't even have a name (although those watching the feds' work have dubbed it Tempest). Those same g-men are spending a lot time, not to mention, *our money,* catching "criminals" who randomly hack into sensitive government computers. We have a solution; why not make the computers a little less easy to break into? Wouldn't cost as much, wouldn't waste time and might, for once, make the government look **like it knew what it was doing.**

Oh, goodness, is this getting harsh. Time to lighten **up this column.**

Bending the truth, however, sometimes proves funny so we decided to lighten up this *noir* issue of *IU* with a breezy look at parodies of the emerging "institutions" on the Internet. We've cataloged a few of our favorite site spoofs, from Petscape to *blow* to Yechh! Honestly, you know how we just love anyone who makes fun of anything that's taken seriously by **anyone else.**

At least that, dear reader, doesn't get counted **against our karma...or does it?**

email

VIEWS ON OUR RELIGION

I want to state my concern over an article in which you call Jews for Jesus a cult ("Religion on the 'Net" by Beth Rosenberg, *IU* #5). I find this very upsetting. Have you ever asked a representative of the organization what they believe? People are not held or forced to do anything against their will.

Hannah Neufeld
Moncala@athens.emi.net

The editors respond: Webster's Dictionary defines cult as "a system of religious worship or ritual," so even Catholicism could qualify as one. Unfortunately, most people simply associate it with the likes of David Koresh, hence the negative connotation.

In your "Religion on the Net" story, you used Netcentral Chat as an example of Christian chat lines' popularity. I have been going to Netcentral Chat for about three months and my experience has been that few people even know that they are on a "Christian" chat channel. The many very heated religious debates show that the majority of people on the chat are atheist or agnostic. So why do they go to Netcentral? It has fast software, few server daemons, lots of people and, more importantly, it's free. Plus, you do not have to provide an e-mail address or name and can therefore change your handle at will. You can also make a private chat room that will be erased soon after you leave. These private rooms are often used for cyberaffairs.

As to Netcentral's claim that it is a "clean" and "cybersex free" chat line, this is easily exploited. To use foul language all you have to do is change the spelling or place spaces in the word you want to write. The only thing that stops you is a sign which says "No Cybersex" and that's very easy to ignore. I love your magazine. Keep it coming...

Victor J. Law
law@mailhost.tcs.tulane.edu

I happened to get *IU* from a book shop at a U.S. military base in Japan. The magazine is informative, entertaining and attractively designed. One reason I bought it was for the list of religions in the article, "Religion on the 'Net" that included the Baha'i Faith, of which I am a member. To be very accurate and exact, it should be "Baha'i" with the apostrophe and, when technically possible, the latter "a" and "i" should have accent marks over them. Obviously, this is not a major discrepancy. Although I installed a modem only a few weeks ago, I am already communicating with Baha'i friends both here and abroad. Just a note to let you know that your magazine is being read in the Far East and by Japanese people, as well as by Baha'is. Best wishes for your success. Thank you for your interesting articles. Keep up the good work. Warm greetings,

Hiro Okada
Tokyo, Japan

ARTISTIC BANTER?

I was very impressed with your response to caulkins@teleport.com (E-Mail, *IU* #5). I enjoy your creativity and artistic banter and find the layout of your magazine much easier and more interesting than the other so-called online mags. Keep up the fun work and I'll keep reading as will many others, I'm sure.

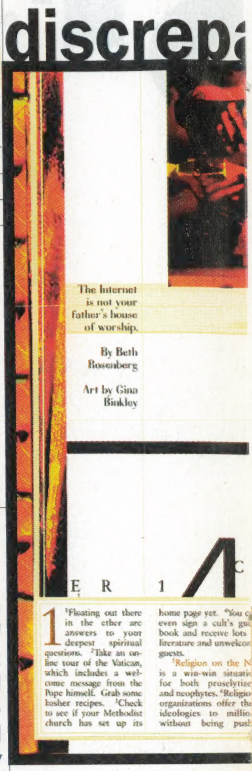
M. Swenson
vblb45a@prodigy.com

OUR FAVORITE WHIPPING BOY

Surely you jest! (Yes, I know, you were). Seriously, Yanni is very popular on the Web. There are official and unofficial Yanni sites and a mailing list with more than 200 members (including yours truly). Give Yanni a little more credit.

Robert Walker
anglia@qcontinuum.com
http://www.qcontinuum.com/~anglia/robert.html

Tiny says: In fairness to the Greek new-age artist and his legions of fans, here are two good sites: Celine's Yanni site: http://www.teleport.com/~celinec/yanni.shtml Official Yanni site: http://www.private-music.com/pm/yanni/yanni.html By the way, the editors have issued a temporary moratorium on Yanni-bashing. They'll start making fun of John Tesh now.



IS THAT A FAQ?

I just finished reading the FAQ and book reviews about Kevin Mitnick (by Simson Garfinkel and staff, *IU* #5). I certainly disagree with some things you wrote. First of all, you failed to mention that Littman was *talking to Mitnick the entire time* he was writing the damn book! This is something worth mentioning!

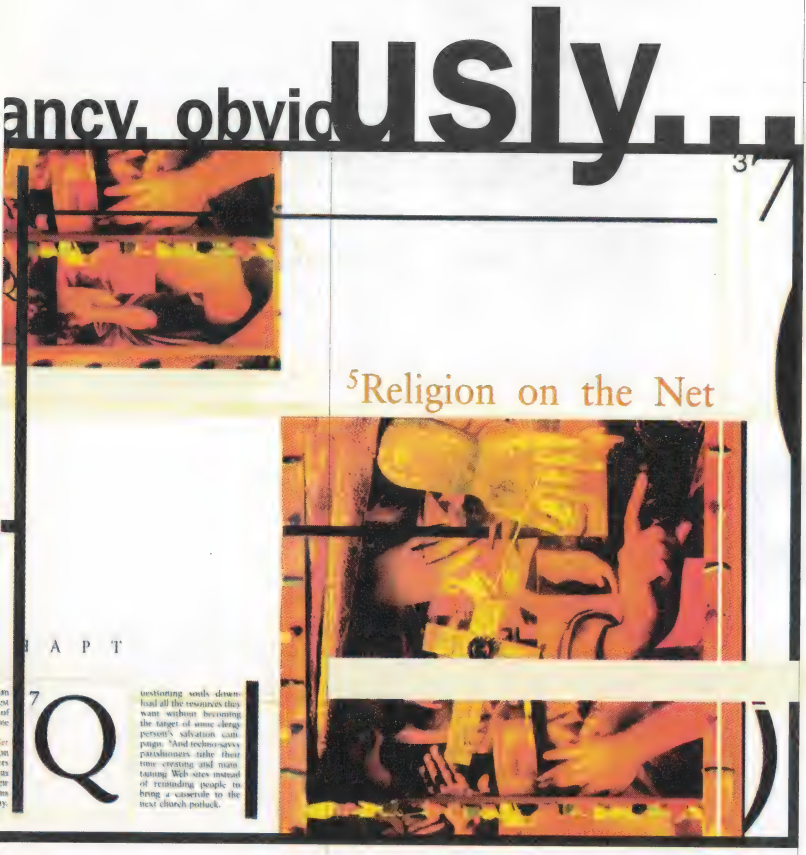
Also, you guys seemed somewhat against *The Fugitive Game* entirely, dismissing it as having the wrong story. UNTRUE! It shows how that @$$wipe Markoff lied about the Well damages, among other things. If this gets published, I urge all you readers to get the book *The Fugitive Game*. It is *the* inside source of information on the entire ordeal.

Leviathan@aol.com

Simson says: You are right! As a result of an oversight, my paragraph stating that Littman is a much cooler dude than Markoff, and that he was talking on the phone to Mitnick for months and months prior to the Dark One's arrest, was accidentally removed from the copy before it was submitted to the Internet Underground editorial process. Like you, I would urge readers to read The Fugitive Game, then drop Kevin a note at:

Kevin Mitnick
Metropolitan Detention Center
P.O. Box 1500
Los Angeles, CA 90053

Tiny says: I just want to remind you that sometimes we have to edit your letters if you misspell things and such, or in the case of Mr. Leviathan, if you wish bodily harm on people.



HUH? OUR LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear Magazine Guys,

This is probably a really bizarre letter but I wanted to know (I am begging) if you could donate any computer to me? I know it sounds stupid but my mom just doesn't care/doesn't have the time/any other excuse...I will be soon subscribing to your magazine and...pleeeeeeezzzzzz try to find one useable for a 13½-year-old boy...'cause I'm really getting sick of "writing."

Thanx,

Lee Walters

Whittier, Calif.

Tiny says: Gee Lee, we'd love to give you a computer and all, but then we'd have to give all our readers computers and that would cost a lot of money. We feel kind of bad for you, though. (Ovi, my mailroom pal says that former President Nixon went to college in your hometown and he saw that Oliver Stone movie.) So, if any of you readers have a spare PC lying around that they want to give to Lee, you can send it to us and we'll pass it along.

"BOB" AND *PHRACK*

To be quite frank, your magazine is the best thing to come up since the word "warez" was invented! I thought that the article about the Rev. Ivan Stang ("What About Bob?" by Kathleen Flinn, *IU #4*) was quite a pleasant surprise. I have known about the SubGenius Foundation for many years and was happy to see Stang's name on something other than "Holy Religious Text," and was happy to read the comments that he made about why he does what he does. He may be the only human being to ever *truly* find slack (except possibly L. Ron Hubbard). On a more serious note, I find that your magazine is the only true 'large' publication that can still have its integrity in an underground vibe. I've read many other underground magazines and I must say that you are in the same league as *Phrack*. Keep kickin' ass!

Pir8Joe

(irc #warez-TRILOGY)

BEEF OF A SALESMAN

After reading the first few issues of your magazine, I do have to say that I'm impressed! You actually give information that complements the 'net rather than just rehashing what's on it already. I also love the WebGuide you include with each issue!

I do, however, have a small nit to pick with you. The article "A '66 Chevy Impala for the Infobahn" (by David Allen, *IU #4)* was quite helpful aside from one point, namely your comments about salespeople not knowing [anything] about what they're selling. Not all of us are like that. I've been using computers since before the Commodore 64 came out and the Internet before I even knew what I was using, so I do know what I'm talking about. I don't claim to be an expert and if I don't know about something, I'll tell the customer. I also strive to keep up with new technology, partly for personal interest and also so that I can give customers genuine information. I also have a problem selling something that I don't think is worth it so I have actually talked buyers ito a lower model if it fit them better. Please don't lump us all into a bad category!

Fred Fredette Jr

75041.1562@compuserve.com

LIBRARIAN LIKES US

Your magazine is the only publication that seems to have picked up on the fact that, "duh," as my 10-year-old would say, being online is FUN! I mean, reading some of these other publications would make you think that 10 bazillion people pay big bucks every month to be hooked into an extended headache. I've now read, and chortled through, all four issues cover to cover, and sent in my $23.95. I hope it doesn't crush your self-image that a 41-year-old school librarian and mother of two counts the days till the next issue.

Wendy40@aol.com

Dear Tiny,

I can't remember when I've enjoyed a magazine as much as I enjoyed *Internet Underground*. I was laughing all the way through! I've been looking for a magazine just like yours—something that appeals to those who go online just for the heck of it and those who have made it a cornerstone of their jobs. I'm currently learning how to create Web pages and your magazine is an excellent road map for finding the unusual Web sites on the 'net.

My favorite thing in the entire issue was your reponse to the letter from Mr. Deady. What a dweeb! Unlike him, I think your magazine will outlast all the rest! It's too entertaining not to last! Have a great day!

Bonnie Landau

THE DEADY WATCH. (An exclusive *IU* Monthly Feature)

Our story so far: Back in January, G.A. Deady of Columbus, Ohio, sent us a letter capped off by the ominous prediction:

"*I give the magazine six months.*"

Well, Mr. Deady, *here's issue #7*—you do the math. Although we doubt that Mr. Deady has remained a loyal reader, we welcome him to submit another prediction of our magazine's demise.

KUDOS AND KORN NUTS

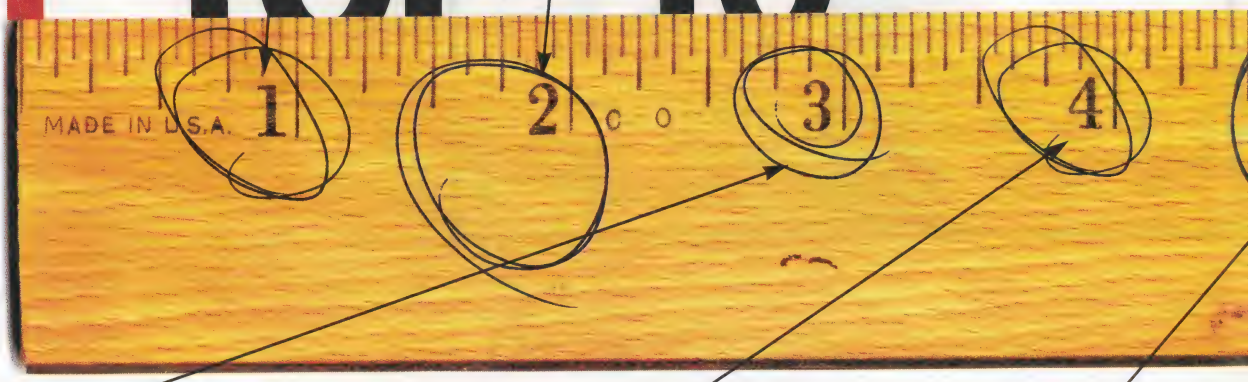
I just picked up issue #5 and I must admit that I miss the polybag. I love polybags. I loved the WebGuide insert. It was easier to keep close to and prop up against the front of my computer. It made me feel good about the condition of things in general.

I'll keep reading your mag, of course, 'cause it's chock-full o' tasty vittles and cool stuff like that. So, kudos for the excellent mag...and korn nuts for the inclusive WebGuide. I want mine separate. With my eyes open for a bag next month...

Maury McCown

mmccown@directnet.net

NET TOP 10

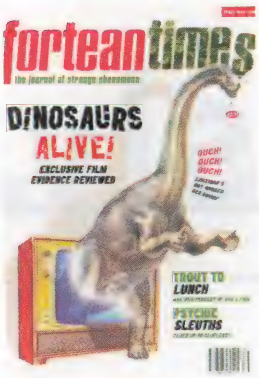


#1 John Labovitz's e-zine list
http://www.meer.net/~johnl/e-zine-list/index.html

If you've never visited this amazing resource for 'zines, it's about time you did. Arguably the most thorough resource for e-zines, from *America's 4x4 Magazine* to *Zongo*, this list offers access through an alphabetical directory. Labovitz, who offers this service free for the benefit of both the e-zines and interested netizens, started the list in 1993 when he found no site on which to publicize his own print 'zine, *Crash*. In addition to the list, the site's author also offers a set of links useful to other would-be e-zine publishers.

(For more on the site's nomadic creator, see Spotlight, page 57)

#2 Fortean Times
http://alpha.mic.dundee.ac.uk/ft/ft.cgi?-1,ft



Fortean Times is a bi-monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on all manner of strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents, formed in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort, an iconoclastic philosopher. Fort himself was a skeptic when it came to scientific explanations, observing how scientists supported or debunked various theories and phenomena according to their own prejudices rather than the rules of evidence. Fort was appalled that data not fitting the collective paradigm tended to be ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining). The *Fortean Times* online continues the tradition with takes on subjects like Bigfoot, UFOs and ghosts who suck up electricity.

#3 Literary Kicks
http://www.charm.net/~brooklyn/LitKicks.html

An impressive homage to the free-spirited folk who symbolized the Beat Generation. Created by Levi Asher, this massive collection of essays, articles, lists, facts and resources about the likes of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs brought out our admiration and desire for the idealistic wanderlust they represented. Well-written, thoroughly researched and inarguably fanatical, a reader could get lost in this site for hours and proabably should.

#4 The Land of the Lunchboxes
http://www2.ari.net/home/kholcomb/lunch.html

Forget blue-chip stocks and mutual funds. If you want to make some cash, try buying and selling lunchboxes. This site not only illustrates the history of lunchboxes with graphics and text, it offers the opportunity to search the "trading post" section for boxes to buy or sell. We were amazed to discover that several of the boxes are worth more than the cars we drive. Detailed explanations of the different genres of boxes (metal, vinyl, etc.) are offered along with tons of GIFS and a full price guide. Highlights include the Scooby Doo and Brady Bunch boxes.

#5 Tales From the Crypt
http://www.cryptnet.com/

"One of the most hackciting sites on the Web." This site, based on and developed by the creators of the comic and television show of the same name, is an intense, graphical excursion to the bowels of sci-fi and horror. The RealAudio sound tour is narrated by the Cryptkeeper who, in a cool Java application, is surrounded by eerily flickering candles. An archive of past episodes can be found in the "vault," with story synopses, details on the show's stars and classic comic images that correspond to each show. Crypt memorabilia is also available via the Cryptique and the "HBO cryptCam takes you behind the creaky gates and rotted doors of Ealing Studios in London" to view live tapings.

#6 The Photojournalist's Coffeehouse

http://www.intac.com/~jdeck/index3.html

Filled with edgy, touching portraits of people living on the fringes of society, The Photojournalist's Coffeehouse is a thought-provoking site dedicated to chronicling daily life through stark photos and simple phrases. Newspaper staffer John Decker, a graphic designer with *The Record* of Bergen County, N.J., spent 10 months living with the homeless to create his photo-essay, "Covington's Homeless," which can be found here. The site also features many more compelling diaries of the lives of clowns, carnies, teenagers and soldiers with photographs by Decker and others.

#7 The Biggest List Of Humor Sites On The Web

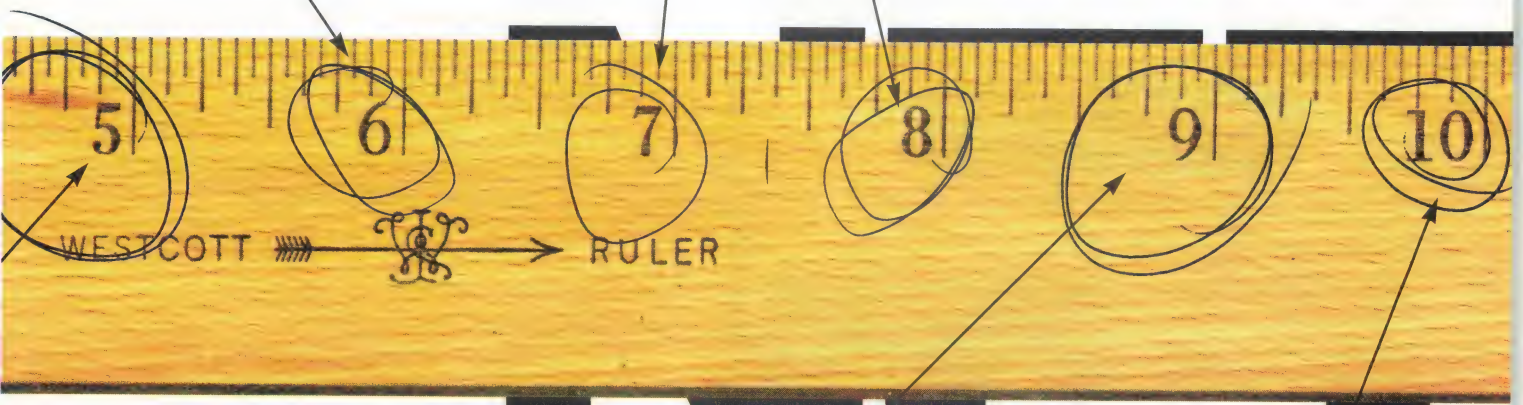
http://www.cs.bgu.ac.il/~omri/humor-sites.html

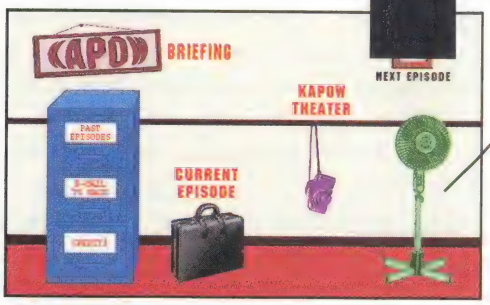
Just about everything that presumes to be funny on the Internet, from the "Ask Mr. Bad News" page to the "Ze Sveedish chef, Bork, Bork, Bork" site, resides on The Biggest List of Humor Sites on the Web. The next step for this comprehensive comedy trove is a rating system that separates out the wheat from the chaff so that unwary visitors can avoid such pitfalls as "The Sex Life of an Electron" at http://www.netins.net/showcase/mpeabody/electron.htm.

#8 The Real Beer Page

http://realbeer.com/rbp/

As if beer by itself wasn't enough fun, this site supplements the liquid staple with an impressive collection of facts, reference works and helpful pointers. At this one site, you can sign up for the beer mailing list, find local brewery tours, learn how beer is made, find e-zines about beer and enter the somewhat alarming burping contest (see this month's Weird on the Web). If just slamming a brewski isn't enough for you, then check out the site's shockingly thorough list of beer drinking games, replete with drinking-game etiquette. Among the links you'll find one to an array of rugby songs. Why rugby? Who else drinks more beer?





#9 Kapow

http://www.kapow.com

Private detective Mace Broade stars in this ongoing detective-fiction series updated every Monday and Friday on the Web. Writers and producers Neal Steinberg and Ethan Goldstine have done a remarkable job designing, writing and creating intriguing content that captures your attention and actually finds you looking forward to the next episode. A mixture of illustrations, photographs and sound bites make the experience multimedia. We won't give the story away here, so search through the past episode file to catch up.

#10 Supermarketing

http://www.steveconley.com/supermarketing.htm

If you think online hucksters make some incredulous claims (see page 26), check out this site cataloging more than 30 ads culled from comic books of the '60s and '70s. As any adolescent reader of Spider-Man or Richie Rich can attest, these marketing masterpieces had legions of kids believing that X-ray specs would let you actually see the bones in your hand, Charles Atlas could transform you from a 98-lb. weakling into "the hero of the beach" or that selling *Grit* was the road to financial independence.

culture.watch

alt.

Why?

http://www.littledebbie.com

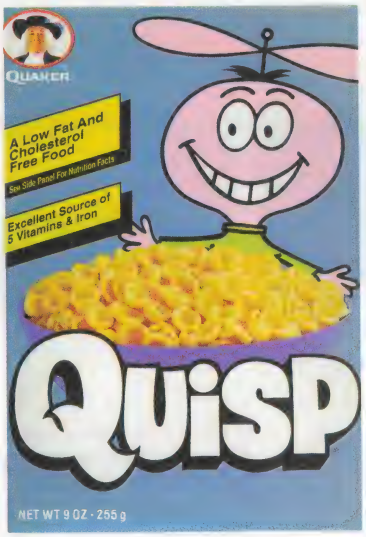
Ever come across something on the Web that simply begs the question, **"Why?"** We do, thus the name of this happy, new occasional feature. This month: the new **Little Debbie Web site.**

The **charge** of companies, big or small, **to the Web** has been well documented. We can see why corporations such as car manufacturers or **software developers** would put up sites to allow consumers to access information about their products. **But Little Debbie?** What more information do we need from the maker of delicious snack cakes such as **Nutty Bars and Star Crunches?** Do the suits think that this decidedly low-tech site will influence our decision when faced with a choice of either a **Swiss Roll or a Ho-Ho** the next time we're at a 7-11? As if to justify their virtual existence, there's the **CyberSnack Survey** in which participants are asked to imagine the taste of what we call "beta snacks"—goodies still in the testing phase. Talk about powerful market research. **"Gee boss, 75 percent of those** who took the survey said they **IMAGINE** an Apple Spice Breakfast Loaf would be **'yummy!'** Let's get a bakin'!"

BARGAIN BIN

The Flake Shop

http://www.flake.com/s03_flake_shop/quisp/quisp.html



Growing up, no Saturday morning was complete without a bowl of **Quisp** and an episode of *Hong Kong Phooey* on the old Zenith. Today, you have to wait until **Sunday** afternoons to catch the exploits of that Kung Fu fighting hound (Cartoon Network, 1 p.m. EST), but thanks to the Flake Shop at **http://www.flake.com/ s03_flake_shop/ quisp/quisp.html** you can once again enjoy a big bowl of sugary saucer-shaped Quisp, day or night.

One caveat: You'll have to pay a lot more now to feed your Quisp jones. **The Flake Shop** promises to deliver boxes of factory-fresh Quisp to your door for **$10 a box** or $99 for a case of 12 (plus shipping and handling). **By the way,** the Flake Shop is not the exclusive manufacturer or distributor of Quisp. The cereal, which is made by Quaker, is available in some supermarkets—**the Cub Foods** right here in Lombard, Ill., had an ample supply for just $2.17 a box, plus tax. Hmmm. Maybe we should start a business, charging only $5 or so per box of Quisp shipped. We could make **Tiny** schlep over there and pick up the boxes...

Numbers on the 'Net

A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* about people measuring their cyberstatus by putting their names into Alta Vista piqued our curiosity.

Rob Bernstein	3	Kathleen Flinn	8
Troy Brophy	3	Lauren Gonzalez	4
Tom DeMay	3	Alex Gordon	66*
Sarah Ellerman	10	G.A. Deady	0

*Most of these hits referred to a football player who has the lamentable distinction of sharing Alex's name. —*ed.*

Netspeak (we are not making this up)

"In my *amazement* I found some passionate and highly energetic songs in metal...in many ways the music is sensational. I have had to pass on a number of songs I liked musically because of the lyrics (Judas Priest 'Living after Midnight,' etc.). Those lyrics wouldn't be right coming out of me. But I have found some terrific songs by Guns 'n' Roses, AC/DC, Alice Cooper, Ozzy Osbourne, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Metallica, even Megadeth (some of their songs sounded like they were written by Jeremiah, they have an Old Testament type of feel)...*I used to be upset* by passing cars rattling my windows with their music. Now you can find me in my car in Beverly Hills with my windows rolled up listening to Led Zeppelin or Motley Crue...(this album) *will all be arranged* by Quincy Jones, it will have big band feel, for a more adult audience but with the same excitement. *After all, trombones and trumpets are heavy metal!* I think this will be a healthy mix!"

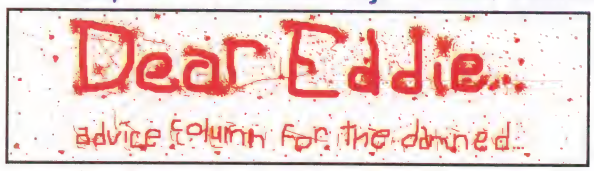
—The always hip crooner Pat Boone discussing his latest project, an album of heavy metal covers, on AOL.

Cyberadvice: Ann Landers vs. Internet Advice Mavens

A woman wrote to Ann Landers recently, complaining about her husband leaving her (and their 12-year-old) for a woman he met on the Internet. This struck her as bitterly ironic, as she had supported his interest in computers for years. Ann decided to warn her readers of the dangers of homewreckers who lie in wait in chat rooms luring otherwise happily married men who would never consider leaving their wives. She ended her column stating, "I know of no solution to this problem."

We wondered how 'net advice providers might handle such a question. We paraphrased the same letter sent to Ann (signing it, "Left With Only a Modem").

Evil Ed
http://www.waste.org/~eviled/eddie.html



All I can suggest at this point is to take the spineless no-brain bastard for all he's worth. Make sure you get the computer so you can slowly disassemble it. Break each peripheral and send them to him in the mail with notes like, "Your modem worked very well as a pigeon on the rifle range," or "Auntie Jean got married, so we used your hard drive, floppy drive and tape backup unit to drag behind the car." Crack the CPU in half and send it to him. "This Pentium is running at 0 MHz now, baby."

Make that bastard suffer.

Ruprecht Roosterdamus: The Psychic Chicken™
http://www.cjnetworks.com/admark/chicken.html

If this e-fair is like most, don't worry. Yer hubby probably e-mailed her whole passages from *Romeo and Juliet* claiming they were his own (which she didn't recognize...duh!). If he ever tries to carry on a conversation for more than 30 seconds or she ever removes her clothes within range of a 7-watt lightbulb...*kerblooey* Instant e-vorce.

Ask Mr. Angst
http://www.utm.edu/~jfieser/angst.htm

Have fun with his weakness for cyberflings. Open an account under an alias and send him tantalizing e-mail. As the exchanges become more heated, set up a rendezvous. When he greets you, introduce him to your lesbian lover whom you brought along (any friend will be happy to play the part). As he stands there frozen, mouth agape, take the modem he left you and lodge it in one of his bodily cavities. Take some photos, and post them on Usenet for the world to enjoy.

Punchy Advice
http://www.rockisland.com/~leo/punchy

Ruth answers: How nice for him. Now that he's found his dream woman, he won't have to spend so many hours in front of the computer! *Bradley asks:* By the way, how fast is the modem?

Advice from Sir Charles
http://gopher.orsps.wayne.edu/charles/clibrary.html

How quick are wives to *say* that they support their husband's hobbies! But oh, when the hobby takes on an exciting new development, how the worm turns, as this letter proves. Brusquely, one remains, Sir Charles Grandiose

OTHER MEDIUMS

DEADLY WEB

If you thought the cinematic cyberthrillers of last year—*Johnny Mnemonic, The Net, Virtuosity,* etc.—were inane (see "Why Are Movies about the 'Net So Lame?" *IU* №1), then NBC's made-for-TV thriller *Deadly Web*, which aired in April, inspired an entirely new level of insipidness. While those silver screen films featured the Hollywood elite (Denzel Washington, Sandra Bullock, Keanu Reeves), *Deadly Web* was notable for its bizarre primordial soup of B-level stars such as Andy Lawrence (yes, he's the little brother of Joey, whoa!), Howard Stern's sidekick Robin Quivers, Ted McGinley (*The Love Boat, Happy Days, Married With Children*), Ed Marinaro (*Hill Street Blues, Sisters*) and Gigi Rice (*The John Larroquette Show*). The plot basically revolves around a single mother (Rice) who is being stalked by an online menace. It starts out innocently with lewd real-time e-mail exchanges, but then the hacker goes on to wreak havoc with her credit cards and bank accounts. At the same time, Marinaro, a cybercop for the fictional Worldnet (owned by Quivers) has been trying to track down his nemesis, the evil "Cyber God." "I've been tracking this guy for three years...He's committed every kind of computer crime you can imagine," Marinaro earnestly says. Soon the two are involved in a scheme to catch Cyber God in his own "Deadly Web." But who is this evil hacker? The computer genius? Rice's bitter secretary? The flirtatious doctor? Her ex-husband? We won't give away the answer here, lest we spoil the fun of catching a rerun of it on USA or TBS someday. With buckets of dubious technology, from bizarre e-mail interfaces to an easily-accessible nationwide database of police records, in tandem with the classic made-for-TV casting (all it was missing was Lindsay Wagner), *Deadly Web* will be remembered as a campy chronicle of the early era of cyberparanoia.

Gigi Rice

Percentage of users

who snack while

surfing the Web:

85 percent

Of Internet users

polled at

http://www.snax.com,

the most preferred

snack food while

surfing online:

Popcorn (24%)

Percentage of

Internet users who

say their perfor-

mance at work has

deteriorated since

using the Web:

31 percent

NETLINE

INTELLIGENCE REPORT: NEWS FROM THE UNDERGROUND

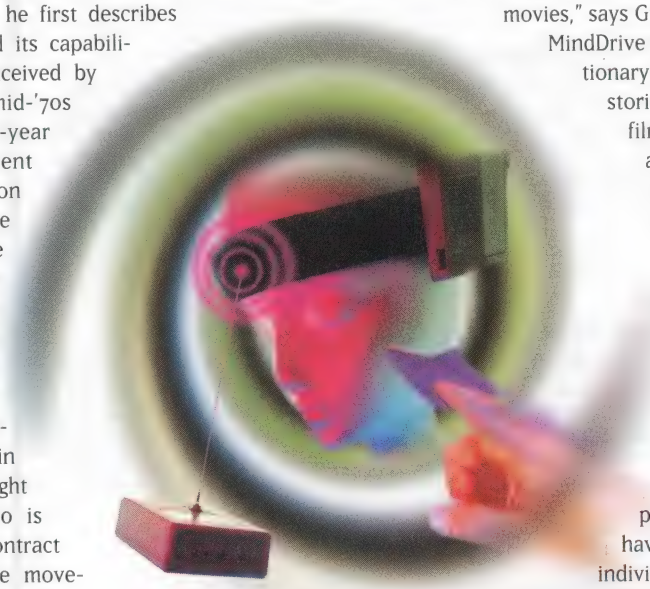
Send news information or comments to: RLB@MCS.NET

It's All in the Head

It sounds inconceivable, but developers at The Other 90% Technologies claim that users can now apply their mind to control the Internet

THE EXPRESSION, "MINDING YOUR OWN business," may take on a whole new meaning thanks to a technology readying for beta release this summer from The Other 90% Technologies group. Their unique new product, called the MindDrive, allegedly allows users to control software programs operating on a PC through thought control.

Unthinkable? Not according to The Other 90% president, Ron Gordon, who says that nobody believes him when he first describes the technology and its capabilities. Originally conceived by Gordon in the mid-'70s during his three-year stint as president of Atari Corporation (at that time, he wanted to create Mind Pong), the MindDrive is essentially a skin sensor sleeve that attaches to the ring finger. "You have 70 different signals there in your finger. And right now what they do is contract and de-contract muscles, and make movements which you started learning at age one," explains Gordon. "What we did was learn how to decipher them and now we translate them into signals to give to a computer to actually give commands on devices, objects, games and programs."



Helen Meschkow, vice president of technical and customer support at IBVA Technologies, a company selling computer-controlling wireless electroencephalograph devices, is somewhat skeptical of Gordon's MindDrive. "From what I understand, he's using GSR (Galvanic Skin Response)...and from what I know it's kind of raw," says Meschkow whose state-of-the-art brainwave visual analyzer has been making use of mind-controlled interactive games and video for over two years now.

Not everyone's a skeptic however. Miramax Films' president of marketing, Mark Gill, became a firm believer in the usefulness and marketability of the MindDrive after just one beta version testing of the technology. In fact, Gill and Miramax were so impressed by the mind-controlling device that they made an unspecified investment in The Other 90% this past April and plan to incorporate MindDrive technology into their Web site at **http://www.miramax.com** and into other upcoming entertainment projects. "It's relatively close to what you imagine from '50s sci-fi movies," says Gill, who views the MindDrive as a potentially revolutionary new way of telling stories. "I think, for the right filmmaker who has an appreciation for this [technology], it's a whole new set of creative avenues they can go down, because now it's not just telling one narrative story. You might potentially have eight threads you're weaving in different ways."

Of course, the interactive films Miramax plans to develop would have to be viewed by users individually. A mental tug-o-war would ensue if multiple persons were hooked up to the MindDrive at the same time—although Gill does point out the attractiveness (at least for a studio executive in search of a hit movie) of creating a film that could change narrative depending on the predominant emotions being felt by an audience during the course of a film.

In addition to Miramax's investment in the technology to develop original Web site content and possible interactive feature films, Gordon contends that MindDrive technology is also being tested by healthcare professionals for medical applications and has been successful, on several test runs, of aiding paraplegics in controlling wheelchairs. Currently, MindDrive connects to PCs like any ordinary mouse and comes bundled with two software programs for an extraordinarily low $150. —Rob Bernstein

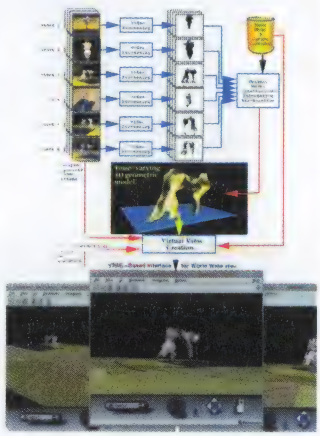
Lords of Illusion

Researchers at UC San Diego are making technological advances that will redefine the meaning of virtual reality

THE 50-YARD LINE MAY NO LONGER BE the best seat in the stadium. According to researchers at the UC San Diego School of Engineering, a developing technology called immersive video makes it possible for computer users to move around a real-time three-dimensional event, like a live football game, at will. Imagine watching the Superbowl from the sideline, from inside the endzone or even from the quarterback's perspective—more or less, the viewer is capable of becoming an unseen twelfth player on the field.

Unlike 3-D VRML worlds or virtual realities where objects and landscapes are mere representations of the real world, the images used in immersive video *are* the real world. The output from multiple perspective cameras are used to create the immersive environmental model; ostensibly, while watching a live football game, a user could select from any of the 20-odd cameras transmitting the televised event, or more remarkably, generate their own cut-and-paste virtual video perspectives of the game.

"Currently on the World Wide Web, the mechanisms to see video are purely VCR mechanisms," says Ramesh Jain, UC San Diego professor of electrical and computer engineering and the principal investigator for the immersive video research. "About two years ago, everybody started talking about how there would be 500 cable channels and how we would have all this complete power. And when they talked about video on demand, it was invariably building a Blockbuster Video rental place online. I found it very disturbing personally. It suddenly occurred to me that there is a much better use of all this bandwidth."



It all sounds rather amazing, but is immersive video truly feasible? Mark Pesce, co-developer of virtual reality-markup language (VRML) and a member of the VRML architecture group, believes it is andsays that development of this kind of technology has been going on for years. "There has been work at University of North Carolina, work at NASA. So this is in tune with all that. It's rocket science, but it's not from Mars."

Of course, this kind of streaming technology can't operate with ISDN lines, let alone 28.8 modems, and will have to await the arrival of cable modems before ever becoming a viable source of video entertainment. Demonstration videos, however, are available online in VRML data files at **http://vision.ucsd.edu/**. —RB

Expected growth of the international online services market within the next five years :

300 percent

Percentage of users who agreed with the statement, 'I know most of my friends from the net':

12 percent

Sources: Viktor Brenner SIMBA Information Snax.com

Web Politicos

At the National Political Index, it's not politics as usual. Maintaining links to more than 3,500 political Web sites and garnering the assistance and know-how of 60,000 plus political activists, 6,000 unelected Washington VIPs and 200 political science academians, the National Political Index at **http://www.politicalindex.com** has cast itself as the one-stop spot for political news. Publisher Denis L. Hemmerle, 59, an attorney by profession, leads a team of aggressive activists who'll link anybody's site to NPI, regardless of their affiliation.

Hemmerle, who worked as Ross Perot's California communications coordinator back in 1992, claims that he's no longer interested in Perot and is currently an "equal party hater." His primary reason for inaugurating NPI was not to promote any one political group, but to organize and provide exposure to the thousands of Web drifting government hopefuls whose political sentiment remains mostly unseen by the voting populace—particularly because of a lack of promotional funding. "We think politics in the United States, to a considerable extent, has been pre-empted by very large business interests that can spend a lot of money," says Hemmerle who suggests that "human beings" retain little political muscle these days. "I use that word 'humans' because that is in contra-distinction to corporations and trusts and things."

To empower the American rank and file, NPI is developing what they call the Nexus Program, an effort to connect at least one politically active computer site to the Internet in each of the United States' 166,000 voting precincts. Hemmerle also

indicates that NPI, in hopes of improving voter participation, may begin investigating ways for Americans to register and vote online...thus extending 1993's Motor Voter to the Modem Voter?

'Net Briefs

The Taxman Cometh

Perhaps it was inevitable. Yes, state governments are now demanding that Internet Service Providers collect taxes from their customers. If you live in Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania or Texas, you presumably owe The Man some money. Of course, the complications of handling trans-state taxes is enormous for ISPs, like AOL or CompuServe, who maintain customers in multiple states and countries. Just one more Internet legal snafu users and providers have to consider.

Music to Soothe the Savage User

Thanks to Terraflex Data Systems, Inc.'s new Virtual DJ site at **http://www.thedj.com**, users can listen to anything from A-ha to ZZTop while surfing the Web. Streaming radio broadcasts is nothing new to the Web, but Virtual DJ, unlike any other radio site, offers users up to 24 free channels of uninterrupted music, including Country, Classic, Hip-Hop, Rock, Reggae and Metal stations. The site will be supported by paid advertising that will rotate on real-time ad banners displaying song and artist information and gratefully operate without the yammering of live DJs.

Cable Ready

The fusion of television and Internet entertainment is closer to becoming a reality than ever before. For an amazingly cheap $4.95 per month charge, WorldGate Communications will offer a new online service called TV On-line (scheduled for a 1997 first quarter rollout) that connects PC-less users to the Internet through ordinary television sets. Unlike other services of this kind however, TVOL uses existing cable lines instead of phone lines to access the Internet. The service comes with a wireless keyboard and reportedly operates at speeds three times faster than any high-end modem. If it's legit, TVOL would make the Internet a remarkably affordable service to the 65 percent of U.S. consumers still not owning a PC or modem. Certainly a technology worth encouraging.

VDOnet's See You, See Me

Joining the mad rush to market Internet telephony to online users, VDOnet Corporation has introduced the VDOPhone, a full-color motion videoconferencing technology that permits users with 14.4 kps or faster dial up modems and video output devices, to speak with one another face-to-face, for free, over the network. At VDOnet's Web site, **http://www.vdolive.com**, users can download a beta copy of VDOPhone at no cost and then search an established VDOPhone directory to find other users online. Crank callers should have a blast.

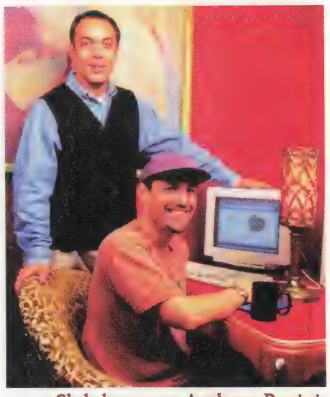
Online Club Hopping

Surf The World's Largest Musical Showcase of All Time

THIS GIG IS NO ORDINARY VENUE.

Incorporating more than 30 musical acts and events from around the world, the Global Internet Gathering (GIG), scheduled for the week of July 14, is the largest planned live musical festival in history. Club owners located in up to 15 different nations, from the U.S. to Brazil to Japan, have agreed to participate in the event and network to **http://www.thegig.com** where users can, at no charge, drop in on live musical performances with RealAudio links, chat rooms and various video conferencing technologies.

Michael Dorf, owner of New York City's alternative music venue, The Knitting Factory, spearheaded the Apple Computer-sponsored extravaganza in celebration of musical diversity and in an effort to promote cultural exchange. "It's not about cultural imperialism. It's not American music just flowing into people's computers. We're very in tune with bringing the indigenous and local scenes to the festival," says Dorf. "What we're ultimately trying to showcase with the festival is that you can go club hopping and go from Tokyo to Sydney to New York all in 15 minutes."



Club hoppers Andrew Rasiej (standing) and Michael Dorf.

Dorf's co-producer for the festival is rival New York club owner Andrew Rasiej who runs the music venue, The Irving Plaza. Similarly interested in networking clubs from around the world, Rasiej joined Dorf in hopes of developing the Internet's capacity to support independent artists in the digital age. "Our effort, I think, portends a future where independent artists are going to further explore this medium to identify new ways to distribute music. We think the distribution model that currently exists is archaic and is not necessarily supportive of exposing new music," says Rasiej.

Last year, artists Laurie Anderson, Throwing Muses, Todd Rundgren, Alice Donut, Buffalo Tom and others turned out for the producers' Macintosh Music Festival. At press time, no acts were yet scheduled for the '96 July show, but both Dorf and Rasiej promise that there'll be an equally impressive turnout this year, including links to the Montreaux Jazz Festival in Switzerland and Lollapalooza. Independent bands may also participate in the GIG in an area hosted by HotWired entitled Open Mic—here, musicians from around the world can post information about their performance times during the week's events.

It may be wishful thinking, but Dorf estimates the GIG will receive 10 to 20 million hits per day of the event. Can the site maintain that many hits? Dorf thinks so and explains that the GIG is really just a tollway to other sites where the interactive stages will be hosted by groups like HotWired and SonicNet. "The site will actually be residing on 30 or 40 major servers. You'll never notice it because our navigational bars are going to be on everyone's pages that they're doing for us. You'll just flow through."

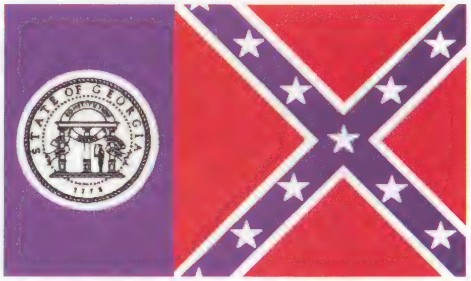
When the seven-day festivity comes to a close, Dorf and Rasiej have plans to archive the event so that users can return again and again to the GIG. The event's producers also suspect that they'll maintain the established network of clubs for future collaborations.

The Night the Sites Went Out in Georgia

New State Legislation Prevents Georgians from Linking to the Rest of the World

THANKS TO THE APRIL 18 PASSING OF House Bill 1630, Georgia residents must now obtain legal authorization from an organization or company before using their trademarked name, logo, copyrighted symbol or legal or official seal on a Web site. And according to Sheri Steele, Staff Counsel for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the wording of the law will not only prevent Peach State users from linking their site to other sites on the Web, but will also make it illegal for them to use "false identities" when transmitting information over the Internet. By "false identities," Steele means any user ID such as IU@mcs.net or a numerical CompuServe address that does not clearly identify the sender of an electronic message.

"If you wanted to link to Coca Cola and you wanted to put the Coca Cola logo up on your Web site so people could click on it and link on over, you couldn't do that," says Steele, whose plea to Georgia Gov. Zell Miller to veto HB1630 was ignored. "You probably couldn't even write, 'I don't like Coca Cola' unless you got permission from them because Coca Cola is a trademark...It seems to be another one of those bills that is passed by people who don't use the Internet and don't really have an understanding of how it can be limiting,"



Rep. Don Parsons (Marietta), who authored HB 1630, disagrees with Steele's interpretation of the law and says that his purpose in drafting the bill was to prevent users from designing home pages that falsely appear as the official home page of another individual or company. Parsons also argues that no member of the Electronic Frontier Foundation ever contacted him to discuss concerns about the bill. "I guess you could say there was no opposition to [HB 1630] in the legislative process through the General Assembly," says Parsons.

In California, a piece of similarly confusing legislation presently exists in draft form, despite current federal and state laws that already protect intellectual property on the Web, according to a newsletter posted by the EFF at their site, http://www.eff.org. And if this trend in sloppy state regulation of the Internet continues, worries Steele, it won't be long before Congress has made "criminals of the vast majority of us who communicate online."

is it worth it?

Pick Up Girls Fast with Total Confidence
http://home.earthlink.net/~xotic/fast.html

Considering this month's cover story, "Deception on the 'Net," it seems only befitting that we stumbled upon Pick Up Girls Fast and with Total Confidence for this issue's "Is It Worth It?" column. The site is essentially an advertisement for a manual and home study course that counsels young men on appearing more attractive to the opposite sex, both in person and over the Internet.

Since I'm the only single male on staff, (and because the prevailing office attitude is, "If it works for Rob, it'll work for anyone") I was pressured into the unenviable role of guinea pig, and begrudgingly ordered away for the $20 electronic document. Just days after sending out my request to the book's publisher, World Class International, the 82-page pick-up manual arrived via e-mail. Admittedly, I was apprehensive about using the book's pick-up tactics, but the *IU* staff urged me onward, insisting that a test of the product was necessary in determining its efficacy with women.

So I read the manual and hit the streets and chat rooms in search of eligible women, using the professional advice given me by the book's authors. "Women are vain by nature and love compliments," the guide instructed. Keeping that in mind, I tried a few of the 500 published pick-up lines, both in person and in America Online chat rooms: "Your eyes are as blue as my toilet water at home;" "Hey baby, you look better than a new set of snow tires;" "Do I know you from somewhere or is it just that you have your clothes on?"

Needless to say, I was disappointed with the results of my efforts to pick up women, and decided to contact the authors of the book to discuss the problems I had encountered. At first, I imagined that I was the butt end of an Internet scam or prank, but the one author I spoke with, who requested anonymity, insisted that the pick-up guide was a legitimate and tested product. When questioned about his work, however, I discovered that only 80 to 100 women were ever surveyed for the book, and of the pick-up lines tested on this rather small pool of subjects, up to 20 percent of them were deemed offensive. Why publish them at all? "Absurdity is actually effective on a real airhead type, the type that doesn't really pay attention to what you're saying," he commented after admitting that both authors were girlfriend-less. Dumbfounded by his logic, I asked if he at least followed the advice of his own pick-up manual to which he replied, "only some of the time."

McLawyers, McLaw and McLibel

Internet Users Fry McDonald's For Bullying a Couple of 'Netizens

FOR THOSE WHO KNOW HOW TO USE IT, THE INTERNET provides a forum that is cheap to access and difficult if not impossible to silence.

Just ask McDonald's Corporation who, in the process of suing two English vegetarians for libel, found themselves the subject of intense scrutiny and criticism from Internet malcontents.

McDonald's woes, in regard to the libel case, began in 1990 when their U.K. division sued British residents, Dave Morris and Helen Steel, for libeling the hamburger chain in leaflets passed out to the public entitled "What's Wrong with McDonald's?—Everything you don't want to know." The leaflet charged the food chain with fostering animal cruelty, environmental destruction, exploitative labor practices and the promotion of an unhealthy diet.

Unlike U.S. libel laws, however, the onus to disprove a charge of libel falls upon the defendant in British courts. Furthermore, legal aid is not available to defendants in such cases in Britain and individuals charged with the crime must pay legal fees out of their own pocket. Five people in all were accused of libel by McDonald's, but only Morris and Steel chose to fight the Goliath in court. It has since become the longest libel trial in British history and is still awaiting some kind of settlement.

In the last four years, there has been much legal wrangling by McDonald's, which has forced the defendants to attend 28 pre-trial hearings and produce countless witness statements to back up their defense. Utterly outgunned, Steel and Morris have turned to the Internet for help. Two years ago, they began posting the McLibel mailing list (majordomo@world.std.com), a daily update of trial proceedings, including witness statements and evidentiary documents, that's currently being distributed to the world. People who sympathize with the defendants are spreading the news far and wide and are providing moral support, the occasional contribution and, more importantly, a constant eye and ear on McDonald's operations around the globe.

The McLibel list has galvanized anti-McDonald's sentiment in a number of European countries and has brought together several organizations intent on keeping the ubiquitous golden arches out of their local communities. People have even posted stories to the list relating their personal experiences with McDonald's and also tactics they've found effective in using zoning commissions, historic committees and the local media to aid in their

Mixed Media

Prodigy Pit Stop

In hopes of revving up its subscriber base, Prodigy Services Company recently announced an unusual agreement explaining their move to become the official Internet Service Provider for the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing. Prodigy, who'll sponsor driver Dave Marcis and the entire #71 Prodigy Racing Team for the 1996 NASCAR Winston Cup Series of Racing, will distribute 2 million software disks at NASCAR events throughout the season. But will NASCAR fans, who love high performance machines, be lured to the high-tech world of online?

Grant Hill Launches One

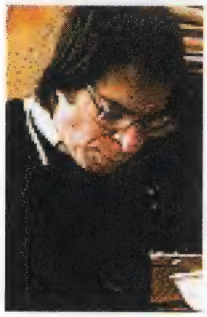
Grant Hill, the 6-foot-8 Pistons guard, is takin' to the 'net with his new interactive Web site at http://www.granthill.com. The purpose behind the site, according to Hill's public relations staff, is to allow the star a more direct relationship with his fans. The site professedly offers users an opportunity to send e-mail directly to Hill, who'll selectively answer and post responses via the Internet. At press time, the site wasn't nearly as spectacular as the star and came off more as an advertisement for Hill's sponsor, Fila.

A Model Site

It probably won't take long before Guess Inc.'s new interactive Web site at **http://www.guess.com**, overlaid with various sultry snapshots of Guess models Claudia Schiffer, Anna Nicole Smith and Drew Barrymore, becomes one of the most visited pages on the Web. Aside from all the flashy apparel and beautiful people who occupy this site, guess.com also offers an international store locator, Shockwave games like "Model Match" and two amusing divas, Daphne and Dafni, who have very little to say.

Ronald McDonald

efforts. Unexpected protests have even started popping up at random McDonald's outlets around the world where organizers are distributing the same leaflets Morris and Steel are presently being sued over. For McDonald's, this public relations nightmare really took a turn for the worse this past Feb. 16, when the McSpotlight Web page **(http://www.mcspotlight.org)**, was launched and registered 35,386 hits in a single day. The McSpotlight page archives all that had gone on in the trial and includes a collection of anti-McDonald's articles, news reports and scholarly reports. Every corporate misstep, from food poisoning to anti-union actions to job-related accidents and fatalities are being posted on the Web.



Morris

Steele

Preston

In fact, it was from the McSpotlight site that most of the information about Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or "mad cow disease," began to make its way into the U.S. And many observers of the "mad cow" epidemic credit the McLibel list and the McSpotlight Web site with forcing McDonald's hand in temporarily suspending the sale of hamburgers in the U.K. during the beef scare—a quote, dating back to the fourth day of the "McLibel" case, was posted on the list and Web page that attributed McDonald-U.K.'s president, Paul Preston, as saying "If we thought that beef was a health hazard to the citizens of the world, you may rest assured that we would not sell beef." Subsequent to this posting, these words were picked up and reprinted time and again by international press organizations. McDonald's, who found themselves in a bit of a bind, felt obliged to make good on the declaration and suspended hamburger sales until they could obtain beef stocks from outside Britain.

And now, recent posts to the site and the list are alleging that the British Ministry of Health attempted to cover-up knowledge about BSE and a fatal degenerative brain disease in humans, and that the health organization smeared the reputations of government scientists who tried to forewarn the public of the problem.

As for Morris and Steel, they're not yet off the hook, but word has it that McDonalds is ready to reach a fairer settlement. It just goes to show the world that grass roots movements aren't yet dead. —David Allen

>IU insider

Giving AOL Hell

In their continuing fight to expose alleged security holes in America Online's Internet service, three high school students, who wish to remain anonymous, are aggressively seeking out users to post their pages on mirror sites. According to the page's publishers, AOL has been threatening their host server with "false legal claims"to choke the truth and have their site shutdown. What's the truth? "There are holes that allow access to e-mail and other accounts in the system," says one of the site's co-creators.

AOL spokespersons could not confirm or deny the charges posted on the students' Web site at press time, but did comment that AOL, like any other network service provider, is concerned about security issues and is always working to make America Online more dependable. As far the legal claims, Johnson says that they may be true if the students are posting trademarked America Online images on their site.

To read more about the ongoing dispute, from the students' perspective only, link over to **http://www.online-security.com**.

Return of the Sponge Cakes

If you're a fan of the T.W.I.N.K.I.E.'s Project page at **http://www.owlnet.rice.edu/~gouge/twinkies.html**, you may have heard mention of the site's creators' difficulties with regard to questions of copyright infringement on Hostess' sponge cake snack food product. As it turns out, the two Rice University students had their page taken off the Web after the university received an unsolicited call from a Los Angeles resident. "Basically, around April 1, the university got a message from a guy named Paolo Fassari," says site co-creator, Chris Gouge. "He was saying that he felt there were several copyright issues which needed to be solved on our page, one of which was the use of the words Twinkie and Hostess. And the other was a violation of a trademark which he owned, 'Winkie.'" To make a long story short, Hostess' legal counsel reviewed the T.W.I.N.K.I.E. Web site and saw no reason to remove it from the Web. As for the mysterious Fassari, site co-creator Todd Stadler says they're certainly not infringing on his alleged 'Winkie' trademark and even suggests that the whole affair might have been a bad April Fool's joke—if you read Paolo Fassari as an anagram he says, it nearly reads, "As an April Fool's."

Net Nomenclature

AfterShock: The stunned feeling one experiences after having waited 20 minutes for a lousy ShockWave application to load.

Ethermorph: The geNETic site mutation that occurs when the codes of two Web sites merge as one.

LameFrames: Annoying uses of Netscape frame extensions,particularly at sites lacking the content to support them.

Cash Registers: Guileful sites that fail to disclose a pay-per-view policy until the user completes his or her registration form.

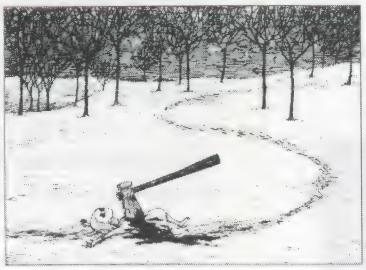
Send your Net Nomenclature submissions to IU@mcs.net. If we use it, you'll win the fabulous IU Random Prize™.

Weird ON THE WEB

THE GASHLY CRUMB TINIES BY EDWARD GOREY

http://charlotte.acns.nwu.edu/arielr/gorey/gashlycrumb/default.html

"A is for Amy who fell down the stairs..." So begins the ghastly alphabetical series from author/illustrator Gorey, who's best known for his drawings that animated the credits for the PBS series *Mystery!* Each of the 26 drawings offers up a grim demise of different schoolchildren, with each death arguably more disturbing than the last. If you consider that "K stands for Kate who was struck with an axe," you can imagine the awful fate suffered by poor Yorick. The site is actually rather cool, but Gorey's drawings are just too unnerving.



K is for KATE who was struck with an axe

ABUSE-A-TRON

http://www.xe.com/loyalty/abuse.html

"You chase cars and bark at them, you stringy, dandruff-sucking, squid-groping, sordid progeny of a profoundly disturbed city administrator!" If you're hungry for a little humble pie, then maybe it's time to head over to the Abuse-A-Tron—a little interactive site that attacks your character, your taste in clothes and also accuses you of all kinds of wrongdoing. Take the abuse, hit the button that says, "Abuse me again!" and receive repeated thrashing to your heart's lament. Are you man enough to handle such maledictions as: "You use dirty underwear instead of teabags, you grimy, dung beetle-kissing, duck-waving, belligerent brat of Richard Nixon's secret indiscretions!" Woe is us, we weren't.

HELP SCOTT

http://www.helpscott.com/

Scott Florance never explains why he requires more help than the rest of us, but he certainly feels as though he deserves some kind of special treatment, particularly with his financial situation. Scott's needs are simple, really: All he needs is a cheap car (under $2,000 will do), a computer and a bullet-proof vest. He's very accommodating. Scott doesn't have e-mail, but he does have a pager and will return your call, collect of course, anytime during normal business hours to retrieve whatever it is you might have to give him (assume West Coast time since he lives in Everett, Wash.). Scott even posts a list of local retailers carrying the kind of level-3 bullet-proof vest he desires as well as a list of auto dealers in the Everett area that might have used cars suitable for his needs. Now, don't think Scott is expecting money for nothing. He offers two pay-back incentives: "I thought of two inventions. One is a social novelty, the second is a unique, widely usable lifesaving security device (electronic)." Gee, thanks Scott.

RESURRECTING THE DEAD PROJECT

http://www.canuck.com/~akwu/

Essentially, this site believes that we can "overcome" death by figuring out the proper frequency to keep the human body alive. You can find out the details in the amazingly odd "Overcome Death Research Miracle Kit." It also discusses bringing back one Dr. Fink by timing the birth of a newborn (who will thereby take on Fink's lost soul) in the section entitled "Best Time to Reincarnate Specific Individuals." There's also some discussion of the Harmonic Convergence in 1987 and its impact on the stock market. All the information is very kookish, but rather entertaining. We're all quite curious as to what happened to Dr. Fink...

RATE YOUR RISK

http://www.Nashville.Net/~police/risk/

Ever wonder about your chances of being murdered? Or your risk of being raped, robbed, stabbed, shot or beaten? Now you can find out if you should be packing heat by taking these online tests that assess your risk of being the victim of any number of heinous crimes. Questions asked include: "How many acts of adultery have you committed (in the last two years)?" "(Are you) going camping or partying on a boat in the next year?" and the telltale question, "(Do you) walk in public more than five times per month?"

ENDANGERED FECES

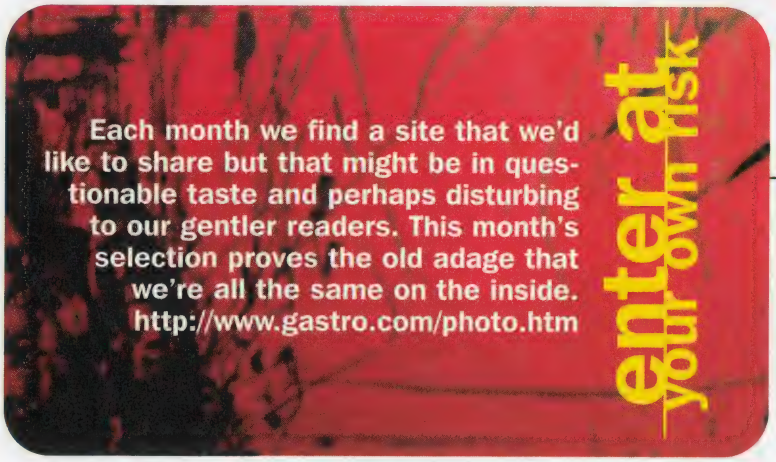
http://www.poop.com

Looking for that special Father's Day gift? Maybe dad would appreciate a paperweight from Endangered Feces. The company sells what it calls authentic, guaranteed *coprolites*—fossilized animal droppings from dinosaurs and their cretaceous companions who lived some 65 million years ago in what is now the American Southeast. As time passed, the original material fossilized and was replaced by iron pyrites: yellow fools gold or silvery marcasite. "Now they have been gathered, gently cleaned to bring out their natural beauty and made available to you," the site notes. You can choose a "touchstone" with a minimum weight of 200 carats (40 grams) of beautiful pyritized coprolites, hand-picked for color, clarity and character. Each comes nestled in a soft leather pouch and then gift-wrapped for only $24. Large coprolites, for use as paperweights, are available for $60. How do you know this isn't just a pile of cow chips? The company promises to send a geologist-signed affidavit and numbered certificate of authenticity for each poop sold. If only we could get something that assured us the *site* was authentic...

THE IGUANA FUN PAGE

http://www.io.org/~peelpgs/jim/iguana/iguana.html

Just because it's weird doesn't mean it can't be practical. This Webmaster is the Dr. Spock of the iguana world. The "Iguana FAQ" will teach you to feed your iguana a diet of escarole, watercress and Swiss chard, and even suggests specific brands of diet supplements. The iguana story page allows you to enter your own anecdote as well as read others' tales, such as one about the iguana that saved its owner's life. The Webmaster spotlights the life of his own iguana, Ignatious, sharing the delightful fact that the creature "craps in his bed." You might want to take into account that he has not been able to keep this from happening when you consider his iguana training advice.



FIND-A-GRAVE

http://www.orci.com/personal/jim/index.html

If you need to know where someone's buried, there's only one place to go: Jim Lipton's massive database cataloging the final resting places of more than 1,000 noteworthy individuals. Beyond listing the sites by name and location, there's a geographic finder that's a boon to vacation planning ("Honey, remember the time we went to see Chester Arthur's grave?"). Where this useful resource enters the realm of the weird is Lipton's page, detailing his hobby of collecting dirt from famous graves for display in spice bottles. Another of Lipton's pages showcases labels from various cans of potted meat and Vienna sausages. Is there a connection between famous dead people and canned meat? It's worth some speculation. Here Lipton is shown kissing the grave of Al Capone and resting on the final resting place of Marcel Proust.

JOSH DAVIS' INCREDIBLE CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

http://pantheon.cis.yale.edu/~davisj/choose/first.html

The perils of being a college freshman are great, particularly at Josh Davis' Incredible Choose Your Own Adventure that takes place in a virtual Web university. As the callow student antihero, you're confronted with the challenge of safely navigating through a day of college life. It may sound simple enough, but Davis' bizarre interactive story line, fraught with mean-tempered security officers, unreasonably hard French exams and a direly tiresome professor, conspires to get you kicked out of school faster than you can register for next semester's classes. Unfortunately, this adventure story wasn't completed at press time, but the site's author had promised an ending soon.

hURL

http://realbeer.com/rbp/burps/rbp.vomit.html

This site used to go by the infinitely less delicate title PUKING!!! Essentially, this page aims to be the definitive collection of terms to describe that action so many of us have experienced after a night spent quaffing a few too many brews. After all, who *doesn't* want to expand their vomiting vocabulary? Anyone can use such tiresome phrases as "blow chunks." Impress your friends by describing your bile and partially digested food with fun terms such as "to air the diced carrots," "cough up pavement pizza," or "talk to rrraaalllffff on the commode-a-phone." Such breezy monikers seem to make the whole regurgitation process easier to swallow, don't you think? Of course, there's just no explaining its online companion, the belching contest at **http://realbeer.com:80/rbp/rbp.burpme.html.** The audio samples alone made us shudder.

Classic Weird on the Web

Michael Witbrock's cat, lured by the warmth generated by the electronic innards of his external modem, often curls up and falls asleep beside the computer. Recognizing his kitty's partiality for his modem and concerned about her being home alone all day, Witbrock devised a way to communicate with her via the Web. All passersby to his site have to do to talk with the cat is type a phrase into a text box on his home page. The message is then translated through a speech synthesis program written in Arexx, running on an Amiga. A computer-generated voice actually intones the message to the feline in Philadelphia. In the archives of things said to the cat, there's a startling number of references to Beavis and Butt-head. The poor kitty has had to endure excessive berating, like "Look at my butt" and "Ya wanna meet my sister?" Of course, not every entry is as insipid; sometimes they're just strange. Consider this remark: "Enjoy the attention my inbred feline superhero. The days of creativity infestation shall soon pass and you will be left only with some fleas, the magic bagel and a mild case of schizophrenia." Don't you know, "Hello Kitty" would do just fine.

Talk to My Cat
http://queer.slip.cs.cmu.edu/cgi-bin/talktocat

STARK'S MUSEUM OF VACUUM CLEANERS

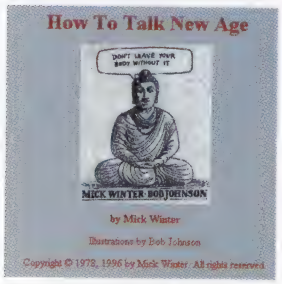
http://www.reed.edu/~karl/vacuum/vacuum.html

The Stark's Museum of Vacuum Cleaners in Oregon houses more than 100 vacuum cleaners old and new, and some of them can be seen at this Web site. The Webmaster, a part-time janitor and vacuum maintainer, smuggled a camera inside this museum and took photographs to share the treasure with vacuum fans globally. He explains the various machines in fine detail, occasionally, and astutely, pondering the mechanics of one or another. "...This makes me wonder at the size of the machine's tank, as the arm power needed to suck dirt through it when half full must be considerable." Don't miss the vacuum with the lamp attachment.

HOW TO SPEAK NEW AGE

http://www.well.com/user/mick/newagept.html

"Don't leave your body without it!" That's the slogan of this site, dedicated to educating even non-believers the basic elements of life in the New Age. None of the entries are particularly exhaustive, but instead provide an amusing overview to the likes of karma, channeling, auras, chakras, pyramids, meditation and Shirley MacLaine. This entry, for the one person most likely not to embrace the loving tenets of the philosophy, is typical: "SATAN is also known as the Devil. He is an evil-looking fellow with horns, forked tail and bad breath. Satan has been playing against God (See GOD) for a long time now, trying to take over control of the Universe. Of course God made up the game in the first place, so he's not too concerned about the outcome."



FACES

http://fbox.vt.edu:10021/C/cgilbert/faces/faces_home.html

Combine the hair of Ronald Reagan with the eyes of George Clooney and the chin of Bill Clinton and what do you get? Besides a forgetful, cavorting pediatrician, would you guess that those facial features blend into an eerily striking Elvis Presley? At Faces, Cory Gilbert, utilizing Netscape Frame technology, allows you to combine the faces of a handful of celebs and politicians into alternatively mish-mosh or if you're lucky, a whole new celeb. If you're not in the mood to do your own genetic experiments, there are hundreds of "formulas" for making the faces of everyone from Phyllis Diller to Keanu Reeves. Or try the Frankenberry Monster (Jim Carrey + Bob Dole + Reagan).

kook du jour

At http://www.ecn.uoknor.edu/~lchiew/, University of Oklahoma student Lee Yih Chiew suggests what he calls the Electronic Ultra Highway, an idea he believes may revolutionize society as we know it.

"If it can be implemented, it will be the greatest information revolution since humans invented speech, writing, paper, printing, radio, TV and the Internet," Chiew writes. He explains it this way: "A transparent CCD (computer-controlled device) chip is planted in front of the vision spot in the eyeball, so everything a person see [sic] can be recorded into video signal, then the chip encrypts the signal and transmits it to a TV watch implanted on the wrist. The TV watch then transmits the audio and video signal to the authorities [who would] receive [it], for example by a satellite in the orbit. The authorities can also track the exact location of every individual." Advantages include a significantly lower crime rate, since the government will be able to monitor every action of each individual. He also argues that it will allow for greater electronic democracy. "If a country suddenly faces a crisis, the president (or the prime minister) can address everybody immediately, and then voting can be carried out using the wrist TV watch immediately after that. This will be the age of 'real' democracy." People can view the best moments of their life over and over again, although he never quite explains where the images would be stored for retrieval.

Chiew does admit there are a few flaws in his plan. He notes, almost as an afterthought, "In an authoritarian nation with this technology, life will be hellish."

WEB OF DEC

Be careful navigating your way through an online tangle of hoaxes, scams and swindles

BY BOB KING

ART BY JEAN LANNEN

The memories are seared in a nation's collective consciousness, images of pain and random anguish and a universe gone suddenly awry.

November 1963: The crackling black-and-white film shows the slow procession of the flag-draped casket. The tumult in the Dallas police basement as Oswald goes down. The tremble in the face of a youngish Walter Cronkite as he removes his glasses and relays the news that the President has been pronounced dead. Cronkite loses his customary cool on air.

"It's the damned Canadian bastards," Cronkite announces. "They're still pissed over the War of 1812. They killed Kennedy and they're heading to your house now."

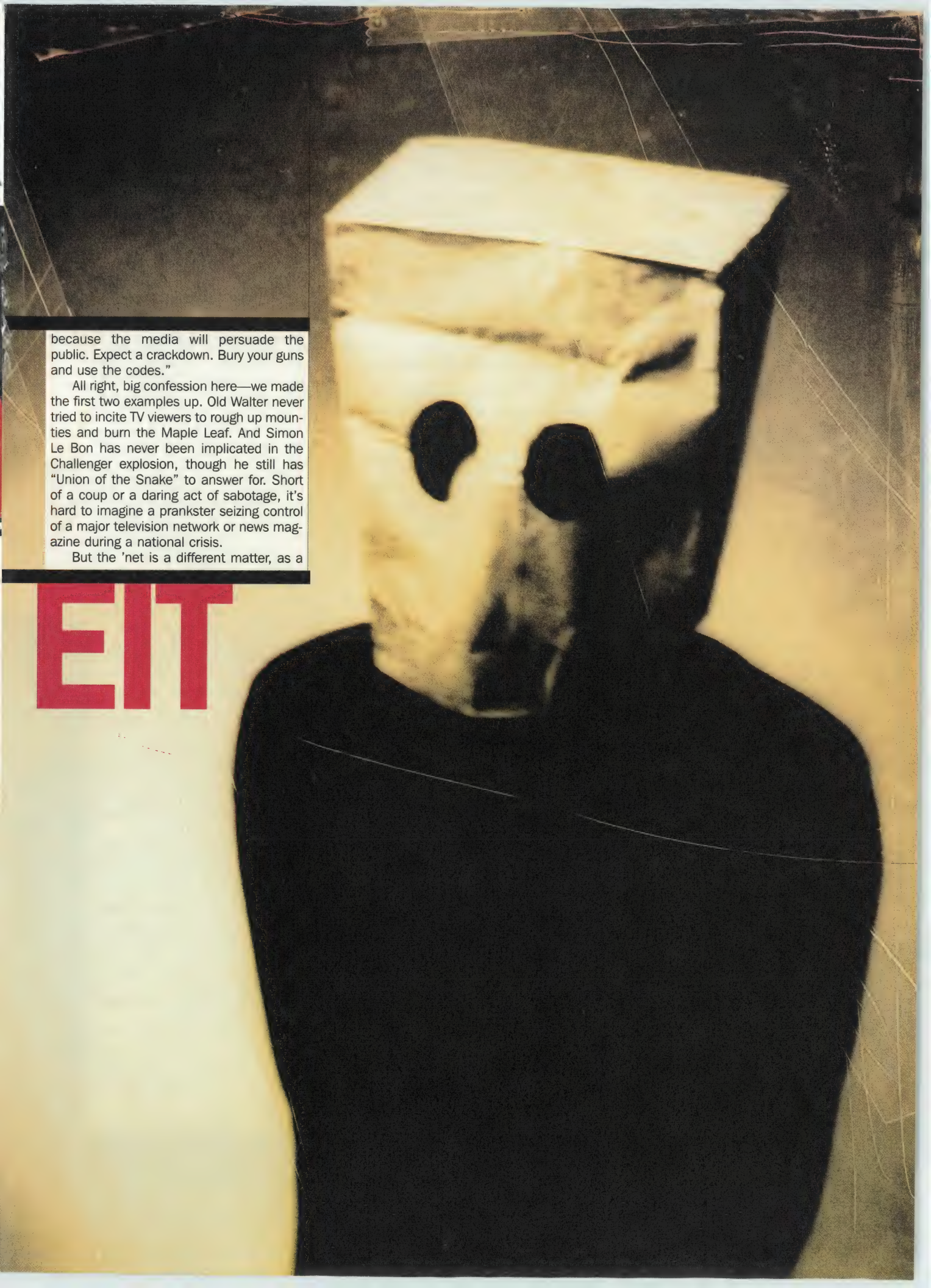
<*Click*>

January 1986: The white cloud spreads against a blue sky, where seconds earlier the Challenger had flown. For a moment, Christa McAuliffe's face becomes a national icon. "Oh my God, no!" the *USA Today* headline screams. Days later, *Time* magazine puts it all in perspective: "Members of the pop group Duran Duran are believed to have planted an explosive to protest U.S. foreign policy and their decline in airplay on MTV."

<*Click*>

April 1995: The rubble of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building smolders in a part of the country where these things aren't supposed to happen. A firefighter cradles a dying infant. One hundred sixty-eight others are dead or dying, as authorities hunt for "Middle Eastern"-looking suspects. And across a global computer network, an angry message flashes.

"OK City bombed by FBI," it begins. "Now they begin their black campaign by killing people in the heartland in order to spread as much terror as possible...They will try to tie it to Waco, Janet Reno is behind this, the campaign will succeed



because the media will persuade the public. Expect a crackdown. Bury your guns and use the codes."

All right, big confession here—we made the first two examples up. Old Walter never tried to incite TV viewers to rough up mounties and burn the Maple Leaf. And Simon Le Bon has never been implicated in the Challenger explosion, though he still has "Union of the Snake" to answer for. Short of a coup or a daring act of sabotage, it's hard to imagine a prankster seizing control of a major television network or news magazine during a national crisis.

But the 'net is a different matter, as a

EIT

computer journalist named Adam Gaffin and a bunch of big-name newspapers learned to their chagrin.

The "bury your guns" message hit Usenet's misc.activism.militia newsgroup on April 20, 1995, a day after the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City. Publicly, at least, police and the FBI had yet to turn their attention to militias and homegrown terrorism. But the newsgroup was alive with speculation.

"I thought, 'My God,'" recalls Gaffin, an editor at *Network World* and author of *Everybody's Guide to the Internet*. As a newspaper reporter, Gaffin had used the 'net to gather first-person accounts from Israel during the Gulf War. Here he was now, on the frontlines of U.S. extremism.

So intrigued was he with the message that he passed it to some reporter friends, one of whom published an excerpt in The *San Francisco Chronicle*. Other reporters apparently saw the post on their own, because it also appeared in *USA Today*, *Newsday* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, among others. "Today, we are eavesdropping on the voices of paranoia and hate," intoned one *Newsday* columnist who printed the message; the newsprint practically dripped with derision.

Forwarding the message "was a heat of the moment thing," says Gaffin, who never used it in his own publication. "I didn't stop to think this might be a hoax."

Well, guess what?

Yep. The author wasn't some bug-eyed Christian Identity conspiracy nut in camouflage gear, hanging out in a cabin with the Unabomber looking for black helicopters. It was a journalism student at the University of Montana, who posted the message as a prank.

At least that's what he told Charley Stough, a copy editor at the *Dayton Daily News* and one of the few journalists to try to verify the post. Stough had only been active on the 'net for 10 months, but he knew enough to e-mail the author to ask for more information. A few hours later Stough had the truth, which he announced to his colleagues on a journalism mailing list.

A couple days later, another hoaxster struck; an America Online subscriber adopted the name of suspect Timothy McVeigh and posted a message calling himself the "Mad Bomber." *Dateline NBC* picked that one up, calling it evidence that the real McVeigh may have discussed his bombing plans over the 'net.

The lesson was a good one even for supposedly skeptical journalists: If it sounds too good to be true, check it out.

"Charley did the right thing," says Gaffin, who called the episode sobering. Stough agrees: "That one's going to be with us for a while."

But Stough admits he's still not 100 percent sure he knows the real story behind the militia post.

"I don't know which is the hoax. Is he a militia man posing as a journalism student, or a journalism student posing as a militia man?"

We went ahead and tracked him down. "Journalism student" is how he's listed in the university computer system. It says he's a junior, from Virginia, and even lists his address and phone number. We even corresponded with him. For some reason, he's kind of media-shy.

At least that's what somebody wants us to think. But after researching this article, frankly, we don't trust anything.

< VIRTUAL UNREALITY >

To people who have hung out on the 'net for a while, it's hardly a shock that people in cyberspace lie.

After all, why not? The 'net is a communications medium with no deterrent against falsehood. Nobody can see or hear you, or tell for sure where you are, or judge the truth of half the things you say. In a world where people are just floating characters on a screen, you can afford to burn a few bridges.

So people aren't above making up quotes, or inventing statistics to win an argument. They have no qualms about concocting bogus alerts about "Good Times" viruses and other factoids. They hang out in chat rooms pretending to belong to a gender they're not, or claiming to be 500-year-old vampires. Then there are the spoofers (see page 38), trolls and pranksters—aping others' Web sites, starting inane arguments, misleading the unwary just for fun. And then there are their profit-minded cousins, the scam artists and con men, using the 'net to ply their pyramid schemes and insider stock rip-offs.

You say you've never done anything like that? Stop acting so innocent. The most common deception of all is the unconscious, unavoidable reality that you're apt to display a different personality at the keyboard than face-to-face—the stereotype of the inarticulate, fashion-deprived bubble child who sprouts into an outrageous, glib, Rimbaud-quoting 'net-savant.

Add all that together and you have to ask: Can you trust anybody?

Well, we do. We have no choice. And most of the time, most people seem to come through. A detailed FAQ and a mailing list of knowledgeable folks can be worth their weight in encyclopedia entries and at least as entertaining as lunch with Rush Limbaugh.

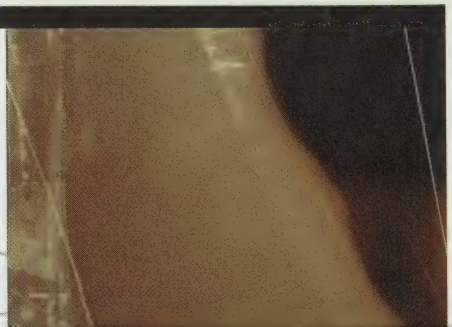
Still, the online uncertainty principle has some people fretting about the future of the 'net. The worry beads rattle especially loud in the hands of the Old Media, which seem to believe that society would have evaporated long ago if TV networks and newspaper conglomerates hadn't been created to safeguard the Truth.

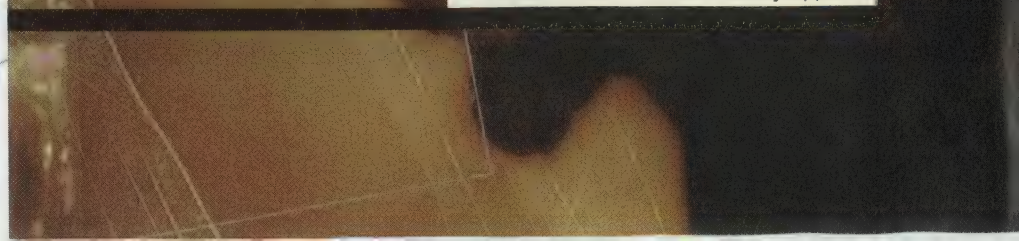
For instance, here's *The Washington Post*'s reaction to a hoax White House site, that replaces images of Clinton and Gore with Beavis and Butt-head and contains links to McDonald's and Gennifer Flowers: "While the spoof on the Oval Office appears to be in good fun, computer experts say it neatly illustrates how easily a Web page can be made to look official and could be used for more than parody."

Yeah. Next they'll be using Web pages for launching nuclear missiles.

But it's not just traditional media types who are fed up with online fakery. "Where are the online watchdogs?" asks Brock Meeks, who puts out the 'net newsletter *CyberWire Dispatch* and has debunked his share of hoaxes.

Meeks doesn't mean federally appoint-





Internet Hoax Hall of Fame

There are so many to choose from, but here are *IU*'s picks for the best of the bogus:

The "Good Times" virus: If nothing else, this wins the Most Annoying award, since the people who keep forwarding it are so terribly earnest about the whole thing. If you get e-mail with "Good Times" in the header, good God man, don't open it. You may go into an nth-complexity infinite binary loop and turn into a clueless dweeb.(http://www.hr.doe.gov/goodtime.html)

The Kremvax hoax: This alleged Usenet site in the Kremlin, announced on April Fools' Day in 1984, wins points for historic and sentimental value. It also inspired a real-life Kremvax in Moscow, which reportedly funneled information to pro-democracy groups during the 1991 Soviet coup attempt. (http://www.cwi.nl/~piet/kremvax.html)

The Toilet Cam scam: We don't know who was more tasteless—the perpetrator or the people who kept visiting this page in hopes of finding someone assuming the position. Best/worst response: "Is this facility just for guys? In that case I won't bother." (http://wps.com/toilet/)

Fake political sites: Take your pick: www.clinton96.org, www.dole96.org, www.buchanan96.org. Also, a fake White House page that looks *almost* like the real one. (http://www.whitehouse.net). Since the authors are so clever, maybe they can conjure up a real presidential candidate for us?

Microsoft buying the Vatican: An obvious fake ("upgrade to Catholicism?" Geeez!), but this one had legs for some reason. Don't ask us why.(http://www.cyberspace.com/bobk/gen/ms-vatican.html) Also see the latest gag from Gates-land: Windows 95's alleged subliminal images of Jimi Hendrix, a horse and a woman with Princess Leia hair. (http://www.htimes.com/today/access/oldfiles/winhoax.html.)

The Microsoft Network.

The modem tax: The feds are going to start taxing modems, or require users to type 40 words a minute, or make you take an oath before logging on. Don't believe it, but are any of these ideas that much more absurd than the Communications Decency Act?

The traditional April Fools' memo: For goodness sake, folks, *read the date.*

Make Money Fast! Yes, earn thousands of dollars per week for performing absolutely meaningless tasks lacking any shred of economic value. Pardon us, but we thought you had to be elected to Congress to get this sort of deal. (http://www.ot.com/~dmuth/halshame.txt)

Craig Shergold Needs You to Send Him Get Well Cards: Actually, he set his record, got well and is now working on those 33 million thank you letters. So please give him a rest. (http://www.wish.org/wish/craig.html)

Alien autopsies: We all know that UFO's are one of the greatest mass hoaxes of all time, don't we? Or is the *real* hoax the way the CIA has covered them up? You decide. (see *Internet Underground,* December 1995). (http://www.trudang.com/autopsy.html)

Yoknapatawpha County murder investigation: (again, see *Internet Underground,* December 1995). Creator Tom Arriola got a female friend to pose as the victim and her boyfriend to play the killer, and filled the site with realistic newspaper articles and police reports. Even *America's Most Wanted* fell for this one. (Hint: Yoknapatawpha exists only in William Faulkner novels.) (http://www.quest.net/crime/crime.html)

The Spanish Air Force World War III hoax: Technically this isn't an Internet hoax, and we're not sure it really happened. But the story is so hilarious, we can only wish it's true. (http://jpr5.res.lehigh.edu/lighthouse/~josie/prank.txt)

ed netcops. He means us—the Internet users of the world, who should be using our noggins to ferret out the fakes on our own. Meeks said he'd like to believe that the 'net can continue to police itself, but too many people seem to believe everything they read.

Look at how many fell for the story about Microsoft buying the Vatican—so many that Gates & Co. had to issue an official denial. Countless others have swallowed rumors that the federal government is about to impose a modem tax or make users pass a broadcasting-style license test. Two years ago, Handgun Control Inc. was swamped with phone calls after 'net users spread a fake "top-secret" memo claiming that the group wanted to ban hunting on public land. "I don't know why people have to be sheep," Meeks says.

Not that he has much sympathy for complaints from his fellow journalists, who have fallen for more than their share of offline hoaxes. "Nobody believes us anyway. Look at all the mistakes that happen every day in the daily newspaper. Journalists get used all the time."

But with the traditional media, at least, some people have learned skepticism. They seem more gullible when it comes to information they read on a computer screen, as though the 'net were a gateway to secret knowledge about political conspiracies and investment tips.

"It's the fax syndrome," Meeks says. "When faxes first started becoming popular, there was this kind of urgency and authenticity when a fax came onto your machine. 'Oh my God, it's a fax.'

"Now people could care less," he says, but they've transferred their trust to e-mail.

Of course, the freedom to invent, fool people and misrepresent oneself is what some people prize about the 'net. It's the same freedom, after all, that gives people the courage to tell truths they wouldn't express in person. "Online you can learn to be fearless, you can afford to be bold," former *Mondo 2000* editor and veteran prankster St. Jude told the Australian feminist e-zine *Geekgirl* (http://www.geekgirl.com.au/geekgirl/index.html), "I can play amazing pranks, or I can do something even more outrageous: I can be honest."

But not everyone's opting for that "be honest" part just yet. In the meantime, here's what to look out for:

< APRIL FOOLS! >

Some hoaxes rely on a constant supply of fresh newbie meat to keep them in circulation, but it's not fair to put all the blame on neophytes. Pranks and spoofs have been a 'net staple since the days when you had to be at a university or work for the defense industry to get connected.

One of the most fondly remembered Usenet hoaxes appeared on April 1, 1984, when users were greeted with a message from the suddenly undead Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko. With a site called Kremvax, the USSR had joined the network to seek "an open discussion forum with the American and European people," the message read. "Let's open a flask of Vodka."

In those Cold War days, this was absurd. The Soviets were still obsessed with controlling subversive technology like the photocopier, and Washington took a dim view of exporting Unix servers to Moscow. But that didn't keep a number of people—none of them AOL users, mind you—from taking the bait.

A couple were suspicious of Soviet motives: "Your message sounds like a prepared speech!" said one response. "We in America are used to free expression of our opinions on the 'net."

Others welcomed the announcement as a sign that world peace might be at hand. "Be forewarned that there will be many 'flames' against 'The Russians' as the catch-all villain for many topics," one helpful soul proffered. "May I suggest you quickly develop a thick skin."

Several complained that the joke was in "bad taste" when they found out they'd been had. The message was the work of Piet Beertema, a Dutch network manager.

A year later, someone posted a follow-up from a user named Gorbachv (sic): "I am having BIG problem at my site. Only person with root access die a few weeks ago from bad cold." But if you see a message from Kremvax now, it might not be a hoax. After the Russians really did connect to the 'net following the thaw with the West, they named one of their sites Kremvax in honor of the prank.

More recent April Fools' jokes were similarly genial, geekish affairs: Memos claimed that Unix and C were a practical joke meant to make programming as cumbersome as possible, or announced that the Pretty Good Privacy encryption system had been cracked. Another gave PGP inventor Phil Zimmermann his own travel agency ("all reservations are made out to 'Anonymous'"). And one outlined a technical scheme for distributing data on "avian carriers"—pigeons, in other words. (They provide "high delay, low throughput, and low altitude service," as well as "built-in worm detection.")

For some reason, famous people—Bill Clinton, Bill Gates and AOL's Steve Case—always seem to pick April 1 to make bizarre announcements on the 'net, like the Windows 95 interface for the Mac. Then there are the pop-culture hoaxes, like the cancellation of *The Simpsons* to make way for a show about (who else?) hackers.

This tradition has gotten so out of hand that you probably shouldn't believe anything you read on April 1. Of course, some people just can't wait for April Fools' Day. So all year round, we're treated to...

< JUNK-MAIL VIRUSES AND URBAN LEGENDS >

These are the Pauly Shores of the online world, the annoyances that keep coming back no matter how much you wish they would just go away.

"Junk-mail viruses" aren't really viruses but act like them: Instead of infecting hard drives, they infect the brains of the unwary, who feel compelled to spread them to all their friends. The champ in this category is "Good Times," a fictitious virus that supposedly destroys your computer as soon as you open up an e-mail message with those two words in the header. Not only will the virus erase your files, but it will throw your machine into an "nth-complexity infinite binary loop," whatever that is, frying your CPU. Sure. Then the bug will kidnap all your relatives and hold them for ransom.

Whatever. The "Good Times" warning first showed up on AOL in 1994 and has been circulating like a freeloading relative ever since, despite attempts by all sorts of computer honchos to debunk it. Heck, it's even got a few Web sites of its own.

Just rest assured: Some hacker somewhere is no doubt trying to concoct a real "Good Times" virus, but none has appeared so far. So open those e-mail messages with abandon. If the bad things described above happen, my editor will buy you lunch.

The 'net is also rife with urban legends that have migrated from the offline world. No, the guy with the bloody hook isn't too common, but other old favorites keep popping up. For the record, that cookie recipe some stranger sent you isn't a woman's revenge on Neiman Marcus. Craig Shergold, that kid in England, doesn't need anymore get-well cards to get into *The Guinness Book of World Records*. Check alt.folklore.urban for more info.

But what 'netizens really love to fall for is any story about onerous, stupid laws being proposed by the federal government. Invariably, these result in all sorts of frantic

DON'T GET TAKEN — Go here for the facts

Federal Trade Commission
http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/scams01.htm

National Fraud Information Center
1-800-876-7060
http://nfic.inter.net/nfic

Urban Legends FAQ
ftp://rtfm.mit.edu/pub/usenet/alt.folklore.urban
http://www.dsg.cs.tcd.ie/dsg_people/afcondon/AFU

April Fools' Jokes
http://sunsite.unc.edu/dbarberi/april-fools.html

Don't Spread that Hoax!
http://www.crew.umich.edu/~chymes/newusers/Think.html

Jamming and the Language of Signs
http://gopher.well.com:70/0/cyberpunk/cultjam.txt

faxes to Congress folks before reason sets in. These include the infamous modem tax and all its offspring, like the requirement that users get a license and pass an exam on the Internet protocols. Another version required that newcomers to the Information Superhighway™ get learners' permits and travel only with an experienced user.

Then again, is that such a bad idea?

< WAXING THE WEB >

Of course, e-mail and Usenet hoaxes are old hat when you can spoof the Web. Thanks to the wonders of digital imagery, anyone can produce an online version of *The Weekly World News*, complete with photos of space aliens and spurious murder victims.

This year, political spoof sites are in vogue. Thanks to the Web, who knows how many of Bob Dole's supporters really think he puts a Dole banana logo on his podium?

Near the bottom of the barrel is the toilet cam, a spoof on the proliferating Web cameras of fish tanks and coffee pots. It showed an image of a toilet in a darkened bathroom, with the promise that if you dropped by at just the right time you might see someone assuming the position. The perpetrator was Tom Jennings—supposedly the same Tom Jennings who created FidoNet. (They have the same e-mail address.)

Jennings waited until he got a bunch of responses, including this classic of taste and decorum: "Is this facility just for guys? In that case I won't bother." Then he broke the news to his audience in the most subtle, diplomatic tone possible, taking care to assuage the feelings of anyone who might be offended: "THE TOILET CAMERA WAS A HOAX—FUCK YOU ALL!!! HA HA HA HA!!"

He also immortalized those who wrote to him, including one *New York Times* reporter, by placing their messages on his page for the world to read.

Jennings didn't respond to our e-mailed requests for comment about the prank, but some of those who fell for it say hey, it was plausible. Todd Slaughter of Tampa, Fla., one of several who wrote to point out that the image never changed, says he felt betrayed when the truth came out.

"I had seen strange, lewd, sick and demented things on the Web before, of course," Slaughter says, "but they were always *genuinely* strange, lewd, sick or demented."

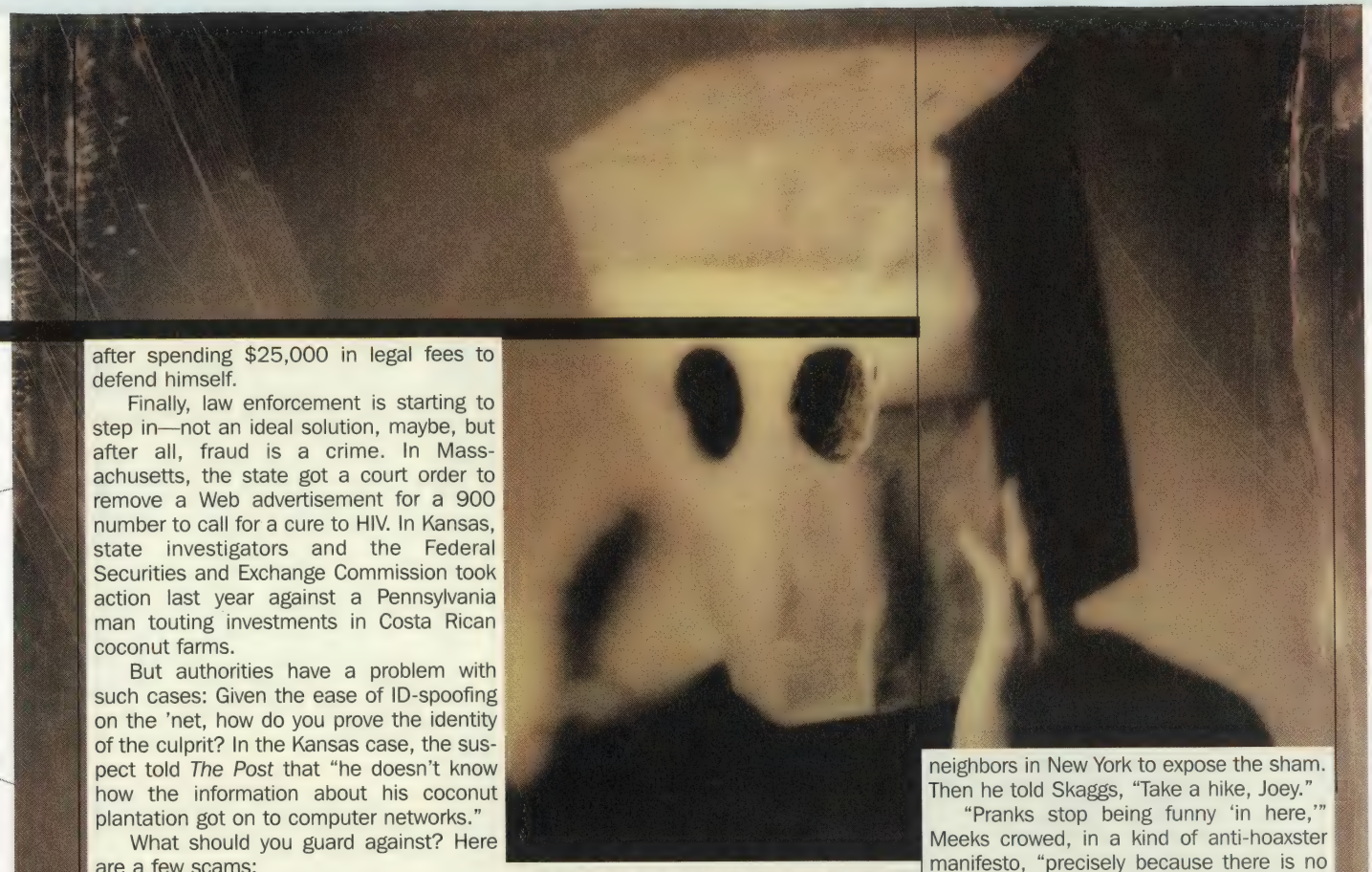
< CYBERSCAMS >

Not everyone's content with just fun and games, of course. Some people are out for your money.

Like the urban legends, many scams migrate to the 'net from the real world—things like chain letters, pyramid schemes and "make money at home" rip-offs, which promise huge returns but turn a profit only for the con artists. And here's what drives fraud investigators crazy: People routinely fall for online flimflams that they'd scoff at in real life.

After all, would you pay thousands of dollars to some guy who walks up to you on the street talking about an "incredible" investment opportunity? Would you agree to send money to his P.O. Box without at least checking him out? Or making sure the investment really exists? Yet those are the types of schemes for which people fall. One Texas retiree, *The Washington Post* reported last year, lost $10,000 to a phony mutual fund suggested by someone on an online service.

In this arena, it can be perilous for 'net guardians to go it alone. Meeks was hit with a libel suit two years ago after his *CyberWire Dispatch* blasted a company that was selling the idea of making $500 or more for receiving junk e-mail. He settled the suit for $64 and no apology, but only



after spending $25,000 in legal fees to defend himself.

Finally, law enforcement is starting to step in—not an ideal solution, maybe, but after all, fraud is a crime. In Massachusetts, the state got a court order to remove a Web advertisement for a 900 number to call for a cure to HIV. In Kansas, state investigators and the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission took action last year against a Pennsylvania man touting investments in Costa Rican coconut farms.

But authorities have a problem with such cases: Given the ease of ID-spoofing on the 'net, how do you prove the identity of the culprit? In the Kansas case, the suspect told *The Post* that "he doesn't know how the information about his coconut plantation got on to computer networks."

What should you guard against? Here are a few scams:

*Chain letters. If they ask for money, they're illegal—either on or off the 'net. (Does the term "wire fraud" mean anything to you?) The most infamous of these remain the MAKE.MONEY.FAST messages from "Dave Rhodes," who claimed to have pulled down $400,000 from e-mail. But they're still all too common, as a glimpse at the canceled spam messages in the newsgroup news.admin.net-abuse.announce will attest.

*Investments in obscure stocks. These are often thinly traded, and thus easy for scammers to manipulate by hyping demand. As soon as all the suckers buy in, the con artists dump the stock and run.

*The E.F. Hutton method: "My broker says..." These con artists pretend to be Average Joes shooting the breeze about all the luck they're having with their investments. Their comments don't look like sales pitches, but they are. (This isn't limited to money talk, either. In his book *Bandits on the Information Superhighway*, Daniel Barrett describes a series of supposedly spontaneous album reviews generated by a record label consultant.)

*Anything involving a P.O. Box.

< MEDIA PRANKSTERS AND CULTURE JAMMING >

Finally, a special subset of hoaxters see themselves as having a higher calling: "jamming" popular culture and the news media to show how prone they are to manipulation and deception. These descendants of Dada trace their lineage through Abbie Hoffman to the audio-collage artists Negativland, who once started a media rumor that one of their songs prompted a Minnesota boy to murder his parents.

It was only a matter of time before culture jammers hit the 'net. One who made the leap was Joey Skaggs, a veteran prankster who has spent decades striking journalists with stories about brothels for dogs and a FatSquad that forcibly pries people away from their refrigerators.

In 1993, Skaggs took his tactics to the WELL, the San Francisco-area online service that serves as a haven for Deadheads and digital activists. His story was that he was president of Sexonix, "America's first sexual virtual reality company." He complained that Canadian customs, citing obscenity laws, had confiscated his equipment and software at the border.

The story's elements seemed tailor-made for the 'net: freedom of expression, government oppression, and of course, sex. In fact, he'd already gotten the story onto Toronto television. At first, the WELL-beings took the story seriously, chiming in with complaints about Canadian prudishness and offering legal advice. But only a dozen messages into the discussion, someone blew Skaggs' cover.

Then the hoax unraveled. Meeks took charge, dialing up a Toronto TV station, Canadian customs and finally Skaggs' neighbors in New York to expose the sham. Then he told Skaggs, "Take a hike, Joey."

"Pranks stop being funny 'in here,'" Meeks crowed, in a kind of anti-hoaxster manifesto, "precisely because there is no 'in here,' because we've all sworn on some kind of unwritten oath that we've hard-coded into the folds of our GreyWare: When you're jacked into Cyberspace, you are who you say you are. No exceptions."

Skaggs had better luck last year convincing CNN and other traditional media outlets that he was running something called the Solomon Project, an artificial intelligence effort to replace judges with computers.

Therein might lie the moral of this tale: Ultimately, a vigilant online community might prove less hospitable to serious misinformation than the centralized, one-to-many media. After all, the same tools that let the hoaxsters spread their messages are also available to the debunkers—if they choose to use them.

Also, when the mass media screw up, the results can be monumental. Anyone remember Orson Welles' "War of the Worlds" broadcast? Or in 1918, when a goof by United Press prompted millions of Americans to celebrate the end of World War I four days early? Were any of the Oklahoma bombing hoaxes as damaging as the erroneous early news reports that the suspects were Middle Eastern?

Nature offers a parallel: You never hear of a virus wiping out a rain forest, where a vast diversity of prey and predators battle each other into a rough symbiotic balance. Blights strike places like corn and wheat fields, where farmers are trying to grow acre after acre of the same species.

Through the 'net, society is leaving the well-tended fields of mass media. Ahead lies the jungle. Remember to ask a lot of questions, and bring a machete.

Your gateway to gaming on the internet.

http://www.nuke.com

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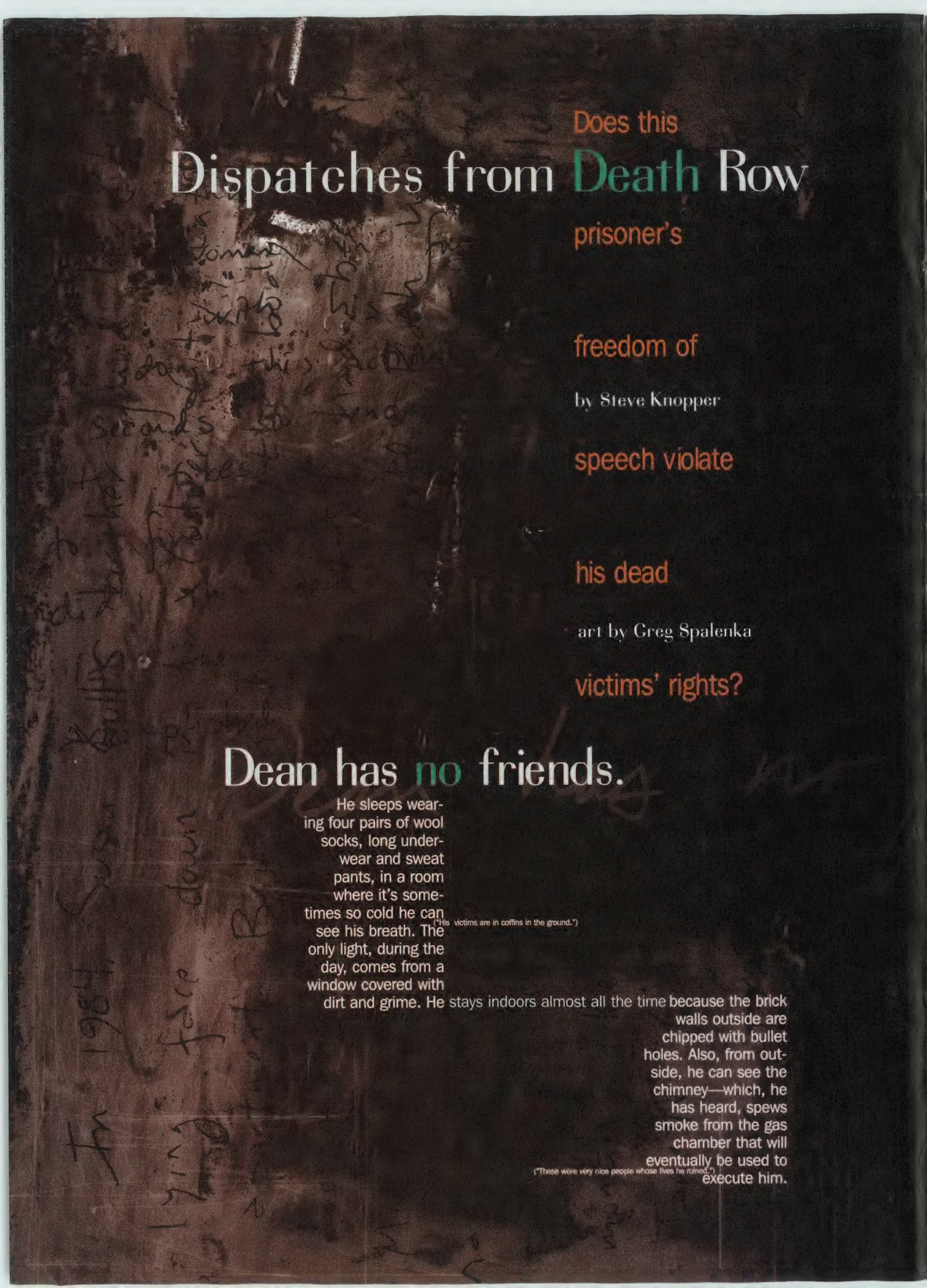
The Netscape Logo is ©1996 Netscape Communications Corporation.



Dispatches from Death Row

Does this prisoner's freedom of speech violate his dead victims' rights?

by Steve Knopper

art by Greg Spalenka

Dean has no friends.

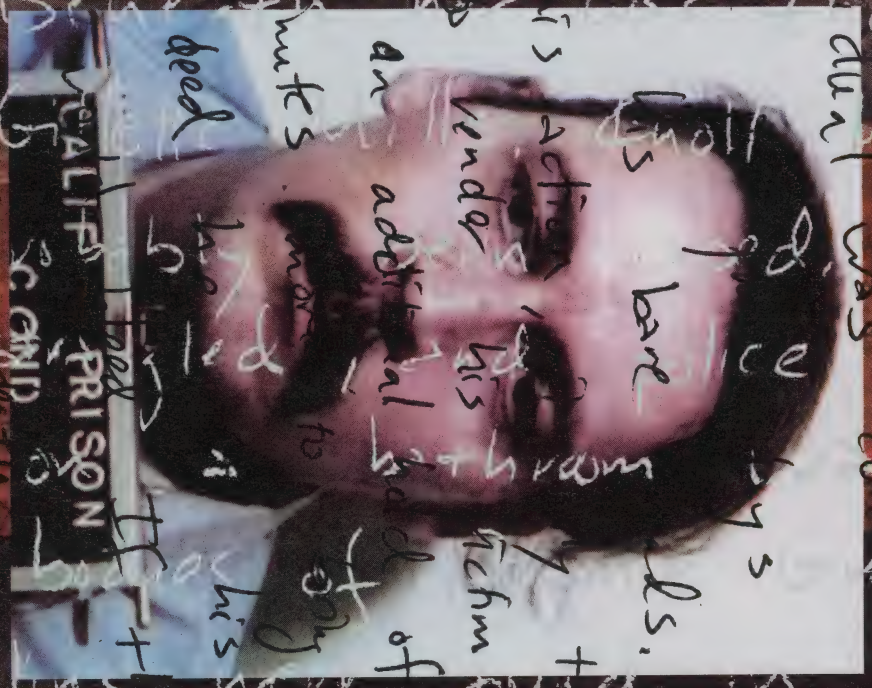
He sleeps wearing four pairs of wool socks, long underwear and sweat pants, in a room where it's sometimes so cold he can see his breath. The only light, during the day, comes from a window covered with dirt and grime. He stays indoors almost all the time because the brick walls outside are chipped with bullet holes. Also, from outside, he can see the chimney—which, he has heard, spews smoke from the gas chamber that will eventually be used to execute him.

("His victims are in coffins in the ground.")

("These were very nice people whose lives he ruined.")

He sleeps wearing four pairs of wool soc
underwear and sweat pants
so cold you can see
hump to the day, comes from
He stays indoors almost all the

In 1989, Susan Krull's brother found her body lying face down in her Culver City, California apartment. Beneath her was the body of her roommate [illegible] had been raped, Mills had [illegible] Both women had been [illegible] found Carter's palm print [illegible] The following month, the [illegible] and Janette Cullins [illegible] similar condition. Police traced the murders to Carter, who knew all the victims. He received [illegible] sentences in 1990 and 1991.



Alex Bennett says he put up his page to "humanize" death-row inmates

We know all this because Dean Carter, an inmate on death row, types a couple of pages about his life every few months, or whenever he can score a fresh typewriter ribbon. He then mails them in an envelope stamped "SAN QUENTIN" in big red letters to San Francisco radio talk-show host Alex Bennett. The KITS-FM morning personality, who vehemently opposes the death penalty, then posts the letters to the Web page "Dead Man Talkin'," at **http://monkey.hooked.net/monkey/m/hut/deadman/deadman.html**.

Reading Carter's ten short dispatches gives you a sense of this 40-year-old's mundane and blandly depressing existence. He rambles about complicated legal procedures, then apologizes for rambling. He debunks a vague, untrue notion that death-row residents live in luxury, with cable television and stereo systems. He signs most of his letters "Later, Dean." He doesn't write about lunchroom brawls or guys making other guys pick up the soap in the shower. He studiously avoids arguably the most relevant detail—that he is on death row because, according to California courts, he strangled four women to death. He's accused of raping three of them. After two death sentences, prosecutors didn't bother to try him for a fifth murder they believe he also committed.

So why is this man on the Web? Bennett, a long-time Internet fan who uses his "Surfing Monkey" Web site to post journals about his radio antics and his Las Vegas vacations, says the page helps "humanize" condemned prisoners. Even if you support the death penalty, after reading Carter's "Dead Man Talkin'" columns you can't help thinking of the convicted murderer as more of a regular guy. The page contains readers' comments—some pledges of support, some calling him a monster. Carter often responds politely to the opinions. When one electronic correspondent posted a slightly distasteful joke about death, Carter good-naturedly corrected mistakes in the punch line.

"You never name somebody you're going to have to kill someday," says Bennett, who airs his anti-death penalty views on his morning show. "You make them into a cartoon character. You call them a demon. You stick horns on their head and you stick a needle into their arm.

"I'm not sitting here defending Dean. That's not what this is about. I'm defending his right to write what he's writing," Bennett says. "A lot of people think this is a very valuable exercise in getting into the mind of somebody who's sitting there with the Sword of Damocles over his head."

"Dead Man Talkin'" has, to a small extent, made Carter an Internet celebrity. (The page attributes the inmate's writings to "Dean," and has yet to mention his last name, but a California newspaper searched state death-row lists for the name Dean and made the connection. In retrospect, Bennett says, he would have printed the letters under a fictional name.) Anti-death penalty pages all over the Web link to Dean's page, including those supporting jailed Philadelphia journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal at **http://www.scn.org/scripts/menus/j/justice/mumia/inet.menu**. Several California newspapers and other media outlets around the country have picked up the story.

Life behind bars: Dean Carter (left) chronicles his death row life at Dead Man Talkin'

So the Internet can do what corrections departments try desperately to avoid—turn death-row prisoners into media stars. In California, prison officials are working on a rule to disallow face-to-face interviews between inmates and reporters. They invoke "victims' rights," fighting every play of a Charles Manson song or attempts by Son of Sam to sell a book. When this happens, the prisoners cash in while the victims' families must relive all the pain.

But officials can't restrict a page like "Dead Man Talkin'." It's not like Carter has a PC and an Internet connection in his cell. A radio DJ simply posts the inmate's typewritten letters on his own page. Even this is a difficult process for Carter. Typewriter ribbons are hard to come by in prison. Over four months passed between Carter's ninth and tenth columns. During that lull, Carter wrote much shorter blurbs responding to readers' comments.

So Carter's opponents, unable to rewrite the Constitution or block out the Internet, have resorted to more traditional approaches to his postings. Jim Pippin, a San Diego deputy district attorney who helped prosecute Carter, doesn't know much about the Web, except that he might try to sell his 1957 Studebaker Silverhawk on it. He simply wants to tell anyone who will listen what Carter did to get on death row.

In 1984, Susan Knoll's brother found her body lying face down in her Culver City, Calif., apartment. Beneath her was the body of her roommate, Gillette Mills. Knoll had been raped; Mills had probably been raped. Both women had been strangled, and police found Carter's palm print on a bathroom wall. The following month, both the bodies of Bonnie Guthrie and Janette Cullins were found in a similar condition in two different counties. Police traced the murders to Carter, who knew all the victims. He received two separate death sentences in 1990 and 1991. Carter was linked to a fifth murder in Oakland, Calif., but the case never went to trial.

"My first reaction is this. Some liberal media personality, to get ratings, is helping some serial killer get an audience to gather sympathy," Pippin says. "I think people on death row should sit there and not say a word until we kill them.

"It may be socially interesting to know what it's like on death row," Pippin says.

Helen and George Cullins: Their daughter died at Carter's hands

"And what society should know is when you're on death row you have no rights," he continued. "He's complaining about food, he's complaining about showers, he's complaining about coffee. These victims are in coffins in the ground. These were very nice people whose lives he ruined."

The Internet can sell Studebakers. It can also broaden the free marketplace of ideas to a degree free-speech pioneer Oliver Wendell Holmes never imagined. Some death-row inmates have used the Web to win support for their trials. Attorneys for convicted murderer Girvies Davis, after pleading their case on the Web, spurred 1,300 people to send e-mail pleas of clemency to the governor of Illinois. They failed—Davis was executed in 1994—but he earned massive media support and national attention. "If we would have been successful, there would probably be 10,000 death-row inmates with home pages today," says Brian K. Murphy, an associate attorney with the Chicago-based firm Jenner and Block who set up Davis' page.

As it is, there are only a few. Davis' page at **http://www.mcs.net/~bkmurph/girvies.htm** still stands as a memorial to the executed man. Virginia death row inmate Joseph Roger O'Dell III, whose lawyers say DNA evidence casts doubt on his conviction, pleads his case at **http://www.gbiz.copm/odell**. There are countless pages about Abu-Jamal, the high-profile journalist and convicted murderer whose supporters say was jailed for his political views. It's simple to find anti-death penalty pages with Yahoo!, WebCrawler or any other search engine; for some reason, that perspective dominates the Internet. The pro-death penalty sites tend to be slight or written by prosecutors' offices and filled with public policy rhetoric and notes on impending legislation.

But at "Citizens for Law and Order Talking" at **http://www.deltanet.com/users/ghc/**, George H. Cullins delivers passionate rebuttals to "Dead Man Talkin'." Cullins, a 73-year-old retired U.S. Marine, is an outspoken advocate of the death penalty. He's also the father of one of Carter's dead victims. During a phone interview from his home in Oceanside, Calif., he sometimes interrupts questions to meticulously quote statistics linking the death penalty to falling murder rates.

Cullins wishes Carter wasn't allowed to air his views on the Internet. But he understands that censorship is illegal and there's nothing he can do about it. "My feeling is if it goes on the Web page, then the victim should have one that goes right alongside of it," Cullins says. "If I can show through my Web page the lies that this man has created, then it shows he is one of the greatest con artists that ever existed," Cullins says. "The only thing I'm trying to do is turn something in a positive vein something that's the most negative thing that can happen to any family."

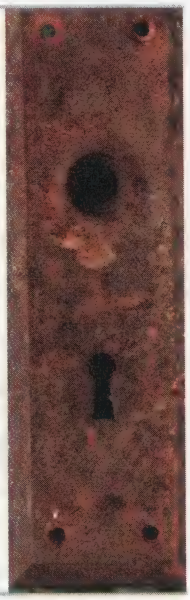
Cullins' page contains facts about homicides and e-mail addresses for pro-death penalty groups as Citizens Against Homicides (vctmsmurdr@aol.com) and his own Citizens for Law and Order (ghc@mail.deltanet.com).

Also, like Carter, Cullins appeals to Web surfers' emotions. Where the inmate never even mentions the murders, Cullins explains in brutal detail how Carter strangled the women to death with his bare hands. "For your information, in doing this action, it only takes 20 to 30 seconds to render his victim unconscious, but it takes an additional hold of the grip for three to five minutes more to bring death," Cullins writes on his page. "After he did this deed he cut his victims to see if they would bleed. If they didn't, he accomplished bringing death."

For fairness and a point of reference, Cullins' page contains a link to "Dead Man Talkin'," with an accompanying picture of Bennett. The radio DJ, however, isn't convinced Cullins' methods are so noble and constitutional. Bennett rips Cullins for contacting KITS advertisers and encouraging them to boycott his program (This, of course, is another form of free speech). No advertisers have decided to boycott, Bennett says, but Cullins' attempts have made him angry.

"I think where it's wrong is my radio program has nothing to do with my Web site," Bennett says. "You want to go after the advertisers on my Web site, OK. But you want to go after my radio station advertisers? And for all the threats, he's really done nothing."

In the end, the oddest thing about "Dead Man Talkin'" is how Carter's crimes, trial or conviction are never mentioned. At the beginning of his first column, Carter maintains his innocence, but that's all he'll say about the case. Instead, he focuses on the maddening details of living in prison: "Occasionally," he writes, "there will be someone that will start screaming in the middle of the night, but if I turn up my radio and adjust my headphones, it isn't too distracting."



It's an ironic thing to note, because the purpose of "Dead Man Talkin'" is to let Carter start screaming in the middle of the 'net. The whole reason this has come into the public eye is because some people haven't turned up their radios and adjusted their headphones. Death-penalty opponents hope it stays that way.

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AUN066

ON

by Simson Garfinkel

Friday, March 29, 1996, Attorney General Janet Reno went on national television and announced that the Federal Bureau of Investigation had conducted its first "Internet Wiretap," and that an arrest warrant had been issued for one Julio Cesar Ardita, who had broken into computers all over the world. The announcement came one day after Ardita's 22nd birthday.

There was just one problem: Ardita was still at large in Buenos Aires. And since computer hacking is not an extraditable offense under Argentine law, that's where he is probably going to stay. Just how long Ardita will remain out of custody is unclear, though. According to the U.S. Attorney's office, Ardita also broke in to computers belonging to Telecom Argentina and other Argentine Internet systems. So perhaps Telecom Argentina will pull the chain of the country's law enforcement system and have Ardita picked up before you read this article. Or perhaps the company will use the traditional Argentine approach to problem solving, and Ardita will simply disappear.

Indeed, what happens to Ardita really doesn't matter. He's already played his role, as far as the U.S. government is concerned. That's because the purpose of the Ardita indictment wasn't to catch this alleged computer criminal. Instead, the FBI wanted to showcase the Bureau's newfangled Internet wiretap capabilities, while simultaneously laying the framework for further restrictions on our civil liberties in the name of law enforcement.

Call the U.S. Attorney's Office in Boston for information about the Ardita case, and they'll send you a 42-page sworn affidavit by Peter Garza, special agent with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service in Los Angeles, California. Garza is the investigator who tracked and eventually unmasked Ardita.

Garza didn't work alone. His principle tool in the investigation was a program called I-Watch, written by the Automated Systems Security Incident Support Team (ASSIST) at the Defense Information Systems Agency in Washington, D.C. The I-Watch program is the Internet wiretap software that was widely reported in the press at the time of Ardita's indictment. The program scans a network for a particular word or sequence of letters being sent over a particular TCP/IP connection. When it finds the sequence, I-Watch starts recording the entire session. In Ardita's case, Garza was scanning for the letters "sni256"—the name of a password-sniffer that Ardita was installing on systems that he broke into. It was also scanning for the letters "griton," Ardita's moniker.

In order to install the I-Watch program, Garza needed assistance from Harvard University. According to the affidavit, Ardita allegedly used Harvard's FAS (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) computers as a base station, using the university's high-speed Internet connection as a staging area for attacks against other computers on the Internet. From there, El Griton broke into computers at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Ames Research Center, the Naval Command, Control and Ocean Surveillance Center, the Army Research Lab and Navy Research Lab in U.S. as well as systems in Taiwan, Mexico and the United Kingdom.

Ardita's *modus operandi* was a simple one that's been widely seen on the Internet in recent years. First, he gained an ordinary account on a target. Next, he ran a program called "pinga" which tried to exploit a series of well-known UNIX bugs, any of which would allow him to become superuser. Once becoming superuser, Ardita ran a program called "zap," which erased any reference to his having broken into the system from the computer's log files. Finally, Ardita installed a sniffer program, such as sni256, a sniffer program that listened to the victim computer's local area network for legitimate users logging into computers on other networks. By capturing the username/pass-

Ardita's "sniffer" (artist's rendering)

word combinations, he was able to spread his reign of terror.

As far as computer hackers go, Ardita's techniques are pretty run-of-the-mill. What it shows, if anything, is the laxness of the security professionals charged with protecting our nation's computer systems. To wit:

- Ardita allegedly broke into computers at the Naval Research Laboratory using a "guest" account. What were these accounts doing on military systems?
- Ardita's "sniffer" worked because the military systems were using traditional, reusable passwords. Why weren't they using one-time password systems, like S/Key or Security Dynamics' SecureID card? Why weren't the logins encrypted using Kerberos or a cryptographic telnet program?
- Simply having a valid login on these computers shouldn't have been enough to gain superuser access. Why were widely known security holes on these systems not plugged?

It turns out that recreational hackers like Ardita aren't the real problem facing our military and commercial computer systems. According to the affidavit, Ardita broke into many computers from which he could have downloaded sensitive (but not classified) information. But the warrant doesn't say whether or not he actually did in fact perform such downloads—apparently he didn't.

Indeed, it seems that what Ardita really did was go out of his way to get caught. He actually made long-distance phone calls from his home in Buenos Aires to Harvard's computers. He widely advertised a hacker BBS called "Scream!"—located in his house. He made no secret about who he was.

But what if he had concentrated on being somewhat more stealthy? What if Ardita was really working for the Argentine military? What if another hacker, with a different name and a slightly less obnoxious manner, was?

According to an October 1994 report issued by the Defense Science Board Summer Study Task Force on Information Architecture for the Battlefield, as many as a third of the attacks on U.S. computers originating from outside the country may actually be foreign governments flexing their information warfare muscles. Those are the break-ins we are probably not reading about in *The Washington Post*, because the perpetrators aren't going out of their way to get caught.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the entire Ardita affair is that the primary technology used by Ardita to break into other computers—password sniffing—is the same technology that the FBI used to take him down. If our networks were protected with strong encryption, it would have made them largely invulnerable to Ardita's attacks. But it would have made it that much harder for the FBI to track him down.

"It's pretty obvious why they [the FBI] are doing this," says Emmanuel Goldstein, editor of the hacker magazine *2600*. "They are sending the message that we need to have wiretap capabilities over the 'net." The FBI is staking out Internet wiretapping as a powerful surveillance tool that will be needed in the 21st century—one that is needed at all costs.

But Goldstein says that the Internet wiretap wasn't necessary to catch Ardita. "He was using [his own] phone number for his BBS. Any hacker could have tracked him down within minutes. They [the FBI] really wasted a lot of money doing this."

At the Sixth Conference on Computers, Freedom and Privacy this spring, I asked investigators from the FBI why the Bureau is spending its limited budget trying to track down these recreational hackers. Why not spend an ounce on prevention, and work to make today's networks fundamentally more secure? Their answer: They don't have a budget for prevention. It's not their job.

But Why Do Their Techniques Leave Such a Stench?

The FBI Smells a Rat

OFF

The unmarked government van slows and stops. The agent inside puts down his coffee and starts in on the day's work: monitoring John Doe's computer, 10 blocks away. John is busy working on his Mac with the curtains pulled against the morning sunlight. The agent watches with great interest as John reads through the cryptography and privacy newsgroups, then downloads some fiction from alt.sex.stories. Everything that flashes by on John's monitor is videotaped for later review: the balance and payees of John's checking account, some decrypted e-mail that John assumed was private and an illegal copy of Adobe Photoshop.

Modern-day spies with X-ray vision can virtually see through

Is this scenario making you take stock of what appears on *your* computer screen? We all indulge in vices large and small, mentally shrugging, "Who will ever know?" In everyday life, we usually manage to keep our transgressions secret, but when it comes to information flitting across our computer screens, the answer is that there *are* no secrets, thanks to a relatively new, obscure form of surveillance that's a threat to your privacy and your civil rights. It's so secret that the Feds refuse to even release its real name. Privacy advocates have filled the void by nicknaming this technology "TEMPEST," which stands for "Transient Electromagnetic Pulse Emanation Surveillance Technology." What it does is allow a simple scanning device to read the output from your monitor from up to one kilometer away. No one ever need enter your house to plant a bug or copy your floppies; it's non-invasive and virtually undetectable. You won't even know what hit you until your name gets put on a list of troublemakers or the marshals come busting down your door.

rise of the TEMPEST

Here's how it works: There is an electron gun in the back of your monitor which repeatedly fires electrons at your screen, causing different pixels to illuminate and form the text or graphics that you see. The gun sweeps rapidly up and down, sending an electromagnetic signal which constantly refreshes the information displayed on the screen. This signal doesn't stop at the perimeter of your computer; it

text by Sarah Ellerman

walls.

art by Rich Borge

continues expanding outwards, seeping through the ether much like a radio wave. Exposed cables act as inadvertent antennas, transmitting the contents of your screen across your neighborhood. Information even travels back along modem lines and power cords, back into the walls and out into the world. These signals can be easily reconstructed. What's more, a spy can differentiate between many different units operating in the same room. The signals don't conflict or jam each other as one might suspect. Even identical units send out distinct signals because of slight differences in the manufacturing of various components. You may not think it, but your PC is hardly a self-contained unit storing information privy to you alone. In fact, you're better off thinking of it as a small-scale broadcast station operating out of your house.

You may think, "So what if someone can see a screen?" Consider the test conducted by security professionals for the Technical Assistance Group at **http://www.thecodex.com** who actually jury-rigged their own Tempest scanning device and took it for a test drive in downtown Manhattan this spring. As described in an essay by CEO Frank Jones, their "DataScan" device (four years in the making) enabled them to "view CRT screens at ATM machines, banks, the local state lottery machine in a neighborhood candy store, a doctor's office, the local high school, the fire department, the local police department doing a DMV license plate check, a branch office of a securities trader making a stock trade and the local gas station (owner) tallying up his day's receipts...The U.S. Customs building (in NYC) leaks information as well as the Federal Reserve. Wall Street itself was a wealth of information for anyone interested. The World Trade Center was fertile. It afforded open parking areas nearby with millions of glass windows to snoop. We headed east toward the *New York Post* newspaper offices and read the latest news off their monitors (which was printed the next day). We headed north toward City Hall and NYPD Police Headquarters. Guess what? They're not Tempest-certified either...Neither is the United Nations, any of the midtown banks, Con Edison (the power company), New York Telephone on 42nd Street or Trump Tower!"

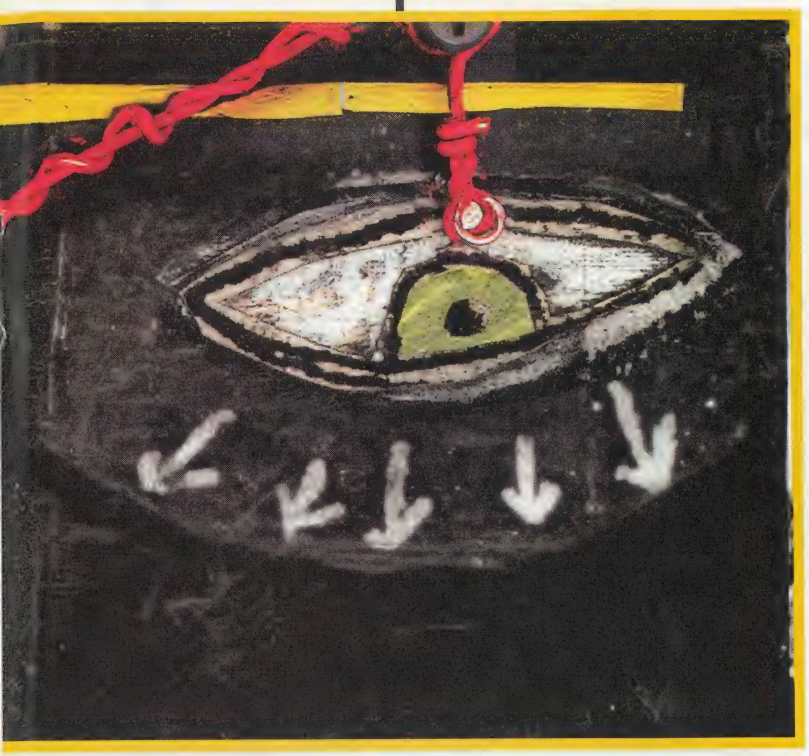
Although this kind of eavesdropping has been featured in the media, most people are unaware of the ease with which spies can virtually look over their shoulder. Most react with incredulity swelling into anger and fear when the technology is demonstrated to them. However, specialists agree that the average person should not be unduly concerned with being spied on. "No, by and large it's not [used to crack down on the common criminal]," says Winn Schwartau, author of *Information Warfare* and *Security Insider Report*. "You've got to look at the expense that goes into one of these things, the eavesdropping vans and equipment. It's not cheap stuff to do at the very highest levels. As a number of prosecutors have told me, 'I wish so many people wouldn't be so paranoid. They don't know we don't have the time or the budget to waste on them.' I wouldn't worry for the individual reader; I'd worry for the corporation that has something of value."

Mike, an electronic surveillance specialist (who requested that we not print his last name) and proprietor of the Chicago-area Discreet Electronics and Security, Inc. at **http://www.w2.com/docs2/z/spyshop.html**, also warns the public to keep things in perspective. "Let's say you are invaded, and there's an outrage at the invasion. It may be that your federal rights were violated... but so what?" he says. "One variable in how to assess countermeasures and detection devices is to figure out how much damage could happen to you as a result of your privacy being invaded." What could someone find out from your screen that would be of enough value or interest for them to go to the trouble and expense of getting a crack at your intellectual property? Pure curiosity? Unlikely. A nasty divorce or child custody case? The pursuit of a suspected hacker? A suspicion that you stole company secrets? Maybe.

"If, on the other hand, you're involved in something that's rather political, if you're suing an insurance company for a $500,000 worker's compensation claim, boy, there's a *lot* involved here," Mike says. "And they're going to do whatever they have to, believe it or not, to get their information."

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS

Paranoid or protective U.S. citizens and companies *can* purchase snoop-proof "Tempest-certified" computers for their own use. However, the high cost of such a secure system may be prohibitive to consumers, says Jules Rutstein, program manager for Secure Systems at Wang Federal, Inc. Even after paying through the nose, information on how the computer was modified to meet the undisclosed emissions standards is top-secret. Wang, found at **http://www.wangfed.com**, a leading supplier of computers to the government, offers an affordable alternative to Tempest products, called ZONE. Rutstein explains, "The ZONE alternative is a lighter version of the full Tempest program. The ZONE program is actually an endorsed program under NSA (the National Security Agency.)" The cost of ZONE protection is significantly less



than Tempest-certified units, but Rutstein wouldn't provide *IU* with definitive figures. "We try to price our ZONE products at what we consider commercial prices. [I'm] ambivalent because it's so difficult to pin down prices on PC products today...We've been selling it from the position that you can purchase a ZONE product for virtually the same price as a normal system. It's not costing you any more." *IU* pressed to find the exact difference between the products, but emission levels are top-secret information, and ZONE can only be measured as relative to Tempest. It is probably safe to say that ZONE products would be acceptable for the average consumer's privacy needs, which is good news for those concerned enough with security to purchase a new computer. The bad news is that you don't have the highest level of security.

Information about exactly how the process works is veiled. Seminars on building Tempest-certified equipment are only available to persons with certain security clearances, and rumor has it that people attempting to talk about Tempest are often silenced with the excuse that they're creating a security threat. Rutstein says, "Tempest is a munitions-controlled item, which means that the export of the product is controlled...Currently the only [foreign entities] we sell to are NATO governments." These prohibitions protect the U.S. from acts of terrorism, but the secrecy surrounding Tempest specifications creates a dilemma for citizens. The government's reticence about standards prevents us from properly shielding the normal computers we already own. We can guess what kind of emissions they're giving off and try to suppress them, but without cold hard data, we can never really be *sure*. Most people don't even know of the existence of the technology, much less the exact shielding specifications. "It is not possible for the average person to go to a database and find out what is Tempest-certified and what is not. I believe that perhaps that's the way the government wants it," says Jones of the Technical Assistance Group.

Jones feels that citizens should be able to test emanations on their own. He points out that "there are several ways of blocking [unintended transmissions], but how effective are they? The people who manufacture [shielding] always say, 'it's great, it's effective,' but you don't really know. But now there *is* a way to test it. We built a room and we used [woven shielding] with the DataScan device and it did block [emissions], but it didn't block them to their specs. We had to use close to twice what they *thought* was secure to actually make the room secure." Mike of Discreet Electronics and Security, Inc. also comes out in favor of defensive countermeasures, saying, "Used in the application of creating awareness, to show how vulnerable, let's say, a bank could be, it actually serves a very high and valuable purpose. The idea here is to create an awareness, because most people don't know, and what's frightening is that they don't *know* that they don't know."

YEAH, BUT IS IT LEGAL?

Jones says it's somewhat unclear whether citizens can lawfully monitor electromagnetic emanations. Depending on how one interprets the 1986 Electronic Communications and Privacy Act, it seems it could be legal. According to Jones, the 1986 measure covers, in-depth, that "it is illegal to own, possess or use any device whose primary purpose is the surreptitious interception of *oral or data communications*." How does this apply to Tempest scanning devices? Well, that depends on how you define the word "data."

Tempest works by picking up computer emanations that happen to seep into the ether, remember? Those electrons were not created to transfer information to another party; rather, they were created for putting images on a computer screen, many theorize. "The emanations are not communications, it's not 'data' by the definition of the word," Jones says. "They are spurious emissions that are nothing but

white noise. It's garbage."

So what about the Act's clause that forbids the "interception of intended communications?" That's where things get complicated, Schwartau admits.

"The key word there is 'intended,' that's exactly correct," Schwartau says. "I've posed this question of Tempest interception to lawyers and judges. The operational phrase came out of some of the cellular interception, the mobile home phone interception: Those are intentional broadcasts, and interception of *those* is clearly illegal." Schwartau says that legal colleagues agree with Jones' assertion that intercepting unintentional, surreptitious emanations from electronic equipment is not illegal. "However, there have been other lawyers who've maintained—and these operate on the government side—that 'we'd find a way to get you.'"

In the end, no matter how brilliant an argument lawyers can make that such transmissions "don't count," there's only one interpretation that really matters: namely, the definition decided on by the government. "That is the end-all and be-all," says Mike of Discreet Electronics and Security, Inc. "If the government says it's illegal, then guess what? *It's illegal.*"

So although the consensus may be that current law leaves a convenient loophole that technically permits Tempest monitoring, the prudent person shouldn't risk it. "I can modify a black-and-white television set, with seven cents in parts, to make it work. Does that make my TV illegal? No, of course not," says Schwartau. "The equipment that the government uses to monitor and test this type of equipment is open sale equipment. There are no clearances required."

Schwartau believes that even while providers' motivations in selling Tempest scanning equipment may be questionable, it's clearly legal for them to sell the stuff. Using it is another question. "It's shaky ground if I'm going to go out and intercept the signals surreptitiously, but you also have to ask the question: How can you prosecute something that is passive and invisible?"

That's a good point and a chief concern for privacy advocates. This monitoring is so non-invasive that most people will never even have a clue that they were spied on. Many fear that the government will abuse their privileged position as the keepers of Tempest standards and that the situation could turn into an unconstitutional, one-sided information war. As a consequence, there is a grass-roots movement of people learning to protect themselves. In his article "Tempest in a Teapot" at **http://www.quadralay.com/www/Crypt/Tempest/tempest.html,** Grady Ward notes that concerned computer users can take a number of simple steps to reduce compromising emanations.

Ward suggests keeping cables between components as short as possible, to reduce the length of cable that acts as an antenna and to use only shielded cable which is wrapped with metal to keep emissions within the sheath. He recommends that users make sure that all computers and peripherals that they use meet the Federal Communications Commission's Class B standard which permits only one-tenth the power of spurious emissions than the Class A standard. Ward also instructs users to keep the cover on their computer, to mount telephone-line filter products at the jack of the modem and to snap metallic ferrite beads over all cables so that offending electromagnetic emissions are used up in a heat sink instead of being released into the air.

Those who feel the need to protect truly valuable information can take further steps by altering the rooms in which they work.

"You don't need the proverbial lead-lined room anymore," Jones says. "There are composite nonwovens that are similar to wallpaper that you can do a room in: the walls, the ceiling, the floors. Paste the stuff on the walls and then put paneling or regular wallpaper over it, and it pretty much makes the room secure. It blocks the electromagnetic emissions from going out. There also is translucent shielding similar to the sun tinting in an automobile that you put on the windows."

Schwartau offers an alternative, saying, "The least expensive and easiest way to do it is electromagnetic moiré pattern masking. That's a technique using an inline box that plugs between the monitor and the video card on your PC. It creates an electromagnetic moiré pattern that for all intents and purposes would keep out everybody but the absolutely most dedicated national resources."

What's more, the active-matrix screens now built into laptops operate without electron guns and their emissions are much lower. When such screens are commonly used as desktop monitors, the possibility for being spied on will be lessened.

Active matrix? Electromagnetic moiré? Isn't all this a little extreme? Maybe not. Privacy advocates note that Tempest monitoring is just one facet of an information war in which the government has an unfair upper hand. We probably don't need to remind you, but the U.S. government has not always demonstrated the best judgment when it comes to emerging technologies, individual rights or covert actions involving "dangerous" citizens.

The hope is that public indignation about Tempest monitoring will cause a true tempest, a whirlwind of anger and official accountability. Only then will we have the same tools and information as the Feds, bringing the battle onto an even playing field.

Perhaps strife, outcry and controversy during this period of rapidly emerging technology would not be such a bad thing. Consider these words from Shakespeare's *Othello*: "If after every tempest come such calms, may the winds blow till they have waken'd death!" ○

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MOOs offer users a chance to live another life in an alternative world

At first, you find yourself trapped in a dark closet. You have no idea where you are. Groping wildly, you're able to find a doorknob, and compelled to escape from the closed space, you turn it.

You stumble out into the glittering anteroom of a giant mansion. The floor is made of black-and-white tiled marble, and the windows stretch from floor to ceiling. You glance through the window to your left. You see a verdant meadow, dotted with yellow and purple flowers. People take part in a country fair a hundred yards away. They loll in the grass and dance around a Maypole. You peek through the window to your right. You appear to be at the edge of a white, jagged cliff, with a magnificent surf crashing below. A path leads to the water.

Do you want to explore on by yourself, or join the party by the grass? You're bewildered by the choices. Suddenly, you look ahead of you at the sweeping marble staircase. A shining vision—a woman dressed in white and gold with flowers in her hair, more beautiful than anyone you've ever seen before—is rushing toward you with open arms. She gives you a giant hug. "My name is Samantha!" she says breathlessly. "I'm so glad to see you!."

Suddenly you realize you can't talk back. You've forgotten all your facilities for speech and you can't even remember who you are anymore.

You haven't died. You're not on drugs. You're in a MOO and your corporeal self, glommed to your monitor, forgot to memorize any speech commands or set a character description for yourself.

Mad User Disease

by Beth Rosenberg

art by Pat Sandberg

To new users, they seem like odd acronyms: MUDs, MOOs, MUSHs, MUCKs. Foreign lands with awkward names, far from the point-and-click graphic safety of the Web. But fear not. If you've wanted to participate in these online text-based alternative worlds, but were turned off by the proliferation of *Dungeons & Dragons* knockoffs or urban sprawls a la science-fiction writer William Gibson, dust off your Telnet software and try plugging in again. MUDs and their kin are growing increasingly diverse and sophisticated. In these locales, beyond the passivity of Usenet lurking or Web browsing, you can actively seek out and create a world where your interests and imagination flourish. Want to research and chat with fellow biologists or explore Hispanic culture *en Espanol*? You'll find it in a MUD or MOO. But be ready to waste plenty of time in the process.

In the Beginning

Jim Aspnes, while a student at Carnegie Mellon University in '89, created the world of the modern Multi-User Dungeon one weekend when he sat down and wrote the code for TinyMUD, the very first MUD. TinyMUD was also the first "social" MUD. Characters could actually walk around the virtual world at will and *chat* with one another instead of being programmed to scoop up gold coins or kill orcs. In time, MUDs officially came to be known as Multi-User Dimensions, Multi-User Discussions or Mauve Ugly Ducks.

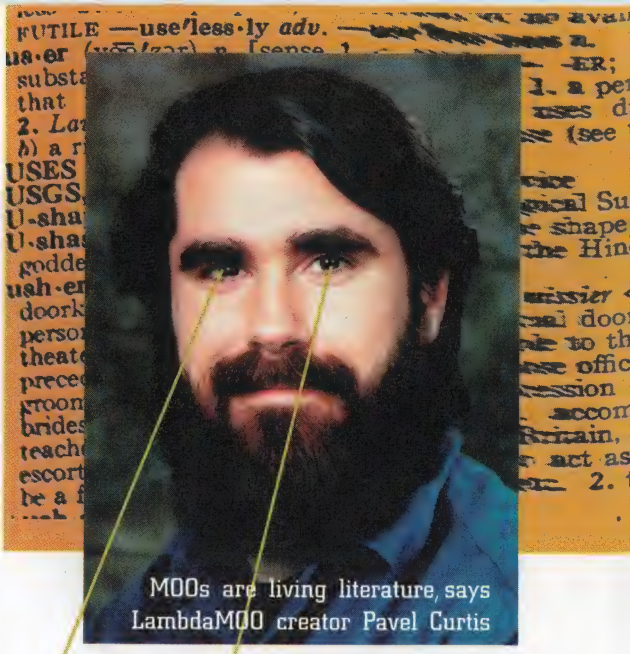
In the years that followed, more enthusiasts Telnetted to

servers around the world to conquer new landscapes, slay dragons and engage in that infamous activity now known as TinySex. In 1991, Pavel Curtis, a researcher at Xerox PARC in Palo Alto, Calif., decided to take the MUD concept one step further. Curtis felt that the whole MUD setup might be more interesting and function more fluidly if users were permitted to actively create their surroundings. So he developed the then experimental LambdaMOO, with MOO standing for "MUD-object-oriented." That means the MUD is developed in an object-oriented programming language, which creates "objects" that link to one another and produces larger, more functional objects. In a MOO, for example, object-oriented programming might facilitate the building of a "room" or the making of a character's "tool" (like a lantern or ESP) with more flexibility.

"I wanted a big project to explore the nature of democracy and user autonomy," Curtis explains. In a MOO, users freely create their own objects and spaces, and programmers continually add more features. Life on the MOO tries be as unfettered as it is in real life—or RL, as it's known to hard-core MUDders.

The virtual rooms of LambdaMOO were initially based on those in Curtis' own house. Thanks to obsessed participants, the MOO now has more rooms than the Pentagon. LambdaMOO has attracted 8,000 active users worldwide, with more than 100 online at any given time—"even at four in the morning," says Curtis, whose initial program works as the foundation for some 200 or so other MOOs.

Curtis no longer has time to go online himself so he's hired a staff of 10 "wizards," or online MUD directors, to offer tech support, mediate disputes and enforce justice. But like any emerging democracy, life on LambdaMOO is often anarchic and sometimes nasty. "It's not a nice place," Curtis says.



MOOs are living literature, says LambdaMOO creator Pavel Curtis

Online Commands

Most MOOs have a fairly extensive set of commands, but this short list will help you participate in most VR activities:

Commands for getting into the MOO:

purpose – read a statement on BioMOO's purpose.
connect (userid) (password) – connect; for example: connect Homer stu888ph.
guest (name) (any password) – to connect as a guest.
create – for information on how to get your own user id.
@quit – to disconnect, either now or later.

Once you're in, you should be using at least some of these commands:

emote (or :) – non-verbal communication with others in the same room.
gag – screening out noise generated by certain other players.
@go – go to a location.
@gripe – sending complaints to the wizards.
@join – join another player in a different location.
look – getting a description of the current room or any other object.
mail – the MOO e-mail system.
@move – move around in the MOO, from room to room.
news – reading the wizards' most recent set of general announcements.
page – yelling to someone anywhere in the MOO.
say – speaking to the other players in the same room as you.
to – direct your talk to a certain player.
@typo @bug @idea @suggest – sending complaints/ideas to the owner of the current room.
whereis – locating other players.
whisper – talking privately to someone in the same room.
@who – showing which players are currently connected to the MOO.

Choosing to MOO

Entering the world of a MOO is a large time commitment, so it's important to choose a virtual world where you'll feel at home. This usually involves some trial-and-error exploration, especially since there are so many MOOs to choose from.

Some MOOs can be accessed through the Web, although to experienced users, these MOOs are more like "MOO-Lite," with more formal marching around and less free wandering. If the Web page says "click here," you have to "click here." You don't have the opportunity to stop and say, *you know, I'd really like to be eating a pomegranate right now,* and create one on the spot. On the other hand, it's good to use the Web as a starting point if you want to get a quickie tour of a MOO or if you're a beginner who's uncomfortable with a MOO's commands. (You can find a long list of Web-based MOOs using Yahoo.) If you're initially put off by the relentlessly dull ASCII interface, just wait—you'll be surprised at how fast you get used to it. For the real thing, be sure you have a solid Telnet account.

Next, think hard about what kind of virtual community you want to join. Do you want to role play? Share a specific interest with your peers? Create flora, fauna and architecture for users to pick up or admire? Explore your gender or sexual orientation? Most MOOs include at least one of these elements and many include all. Be prepared to spend several hours poking around the 'net before you find one that thrills you or makes you feel comfy. (See Sidebar #2)

Some points to consider:

***Current users**: How many are there? Is the lag time between your posts unbearably slow because of all the bottlenecks, or is the place so empty you find yourself emoting to no one? Look for MOOs that still welcome new users, but have a fair number of active ones (25 to 200 is good) so that there's always someone there with whom you can interact.

***The MOO's tone**: You probably want to avoid a MOO filled with immature users who shout at everyone and curse at "friends" in the public rooms. Cliquishness is equally unpleasant. It doesn't feel good to be ignored in a

social setting where everyone else is either laughing, talking or flirting.

***Character descriptions of current users:** Are people playing "themselves" or are they role playing like character players at Ars Magica: "Viviane managed to pass the Gauntlet that Athanasius set for her, but Athanasius believed her to still be too soft' to be a proper Tytalus." If you want to do some pseudo-medieval role playing, then this MOO is fine. But if your goal is to talk to someone about educational reform, then push on.

***Rating the writing:** Too often, a promising MOO is damaged by poor descriptive text. Look thoroughly around the site. Are the descriptions well-written and easy to follow? Do they spark your imagination? How far can you travel without going in a circle? Notice the number of objects that you can pick up or read. Take time to do it, and see what's inside. A good MOO, with interested wizards and players, will make sure that every little experience is worthwhile.

*Is there a human host? Look for a friendly wizard/administrator /helper logged on to answer any questions. (Follow MOO-iquette, though, and don't bug wizards or fellow players with questions you can answer through the MOO's online help.) Commands to move, speak and create shouldn't vary significantly from other MOOs.

Also watch out for text-scrolling problems. Text that moves too fast on the terminal screen will leave you scrambling to remember what you typed just two minutes earlier; text that doesn't break well will force someone else's unwanted pontificating into your sentences.

The Future of MOOs?

Considering rapid advances in software and connectivity, text-based VR may appear an anachronism. What will happen to MOOs and MUDS in an increasingly Web and multimedia-based Internet?

LambaMOO creator, Curtis, thinks the future looks good for MOOs and MUDs. He foresees their continuing integration with the Web and more sophisticated online scenarios. In day-to-day online communication, Curtis speculates that many businesses will offer online "commerce MUDs," so customers and shopkeepers can interact in real-time. But he doesn't think that more advanced technology will wipe out the worlds MOOers love. "Text-based real-time communication is living literature," he says.

Some Interesting MOOs to Check Out

BayMOO
Telnet:baymoo.sfsu.edu 8888
Description: Trippy VR of San Francisco Bay Area.

BioMOO
Telnet:bioinfo.weizmann.ac.il 8888
WWW Page: http://bioinformatics.weizmann.ac.il/BioMOO/
Description: A brilliant MOO for serious biologists. Lots to do and share here. Check out their zoo.

Butterfly MOO
Telnet:butterfly.net 7777
Description: Not much happening here yet on this social MOO, but they are definitely looking for new players. Be a pioneer.

ChibaMOO
Telnet:ginger.lei.net 7777
WWW Page:
http://sensemedia.net/sprawl/
Description: ChibaMOO is a mondo MOO, loosely based on William Gibson's Cyberpunk novels and the general "urban sprawl" theme. Players in the four digits here. You can create anything you want via Telnet or WWW. One of the biggies.

Digital Wasteland
Telnet:wasteland.calbbs.com 8888
WWW Page:
http://wasteland.calbbs.com:8787/
Description: Combination social and role-playing MOO. Not boring. Expect anything.

Diversity University MOO
Telnet:moo.du.org 8888
Description: An online university system. One of the best-known MOOs. Don't join here for TinySex.

MOO Français
Telnet:logos.daedalus.com 8888
Description: Emote like a native.

Global Village
Telnet:general.uoguelph.ca 8888
Description: What it sounds like. Recommended for international virtual socialites.

LambdaMOO
Telnet:lambda.parc.xerox.com 8888
Description: The first MOO ever. Get past the execrable time lag and be prepared for anything.

MediaMOO
Telnet:purple-crayon.media.mit.edu 8888
Description: One of the first, and still one of the most prominent MOOs. For media researchers. Founder Amy Bruckman is a MOO goddess.

MOOtiny
Telnet:spsyc.nott.ac.uk 8888
WWW Page:
http://spsyc.nott.ac.uk:8888/
Description: A MOO dedicated to increasing connectivity and building friendships. Lots of virtual islands.

Sanctuary
Telnet:deneb.infinet.com 7200
WWW Page:
http://www.winternet.com/~cindy/sanctuary.html
Description: A pretty basic and not particularly interesting social MOO for newcomers. Advantage is that you can check out everyone's photograph before you even log in.

SchoolnetMOO
Telnet:schoolnet.carlton.ca 7777
WWW Page:
http://schoolnet2.carleton.ca/english/moo
Description: A primarily social MOO for students 13-18. The people are wonderful and friendly, but don't advertise how old you are.

WAXweb MOO
Telnet:bug.village.virginia.edu 7777
WWW Page:
http://bug.village.virginia.edu/
Description: Hypermedia version of David Blair's film, "WAX, or the discovery of television among bees." Interesting, but only once. You're not allowed to move freely.

If it

Site Spo

Just what is the sincerest form of flattery? Imitation, yes. Parody...well, maybe. As made evident by the collective works of Mel Brooks, a parody really only works once something has become an institution. With the transient, quick-pulsed nature of the Web, it hasn't taken long for a few sites to become so popular that perhaps they *really do* fall in the "top 5%." For instance there's Yahoo!, which even veteran Web users access daily, even if not all of them will admit it. There's The Spot, which was voted Cool Site of the Year for 1995. And don't forget the irrecusable e-zine *suck*, our daily dose of cynicism. There's a good reason everyone on the 'net knows these sites. They're either places we love to use or places we love to hate. No matter what their classification, they've risen above the rest of the dreck into a higher echelon—those sites popular and powerful enough to warrant some good-natured, or not-so-good natured fun at their expense. For *suck*, there's *sock* and *blow*. The Squat mocks The Spot. What's Snooze lampoons the NCSA's What's New pages. Some of the sites, such as *sock*, are little more than a one-shot punch line, while others such as *blow* have developed into sites that could stand alone on their own merit.

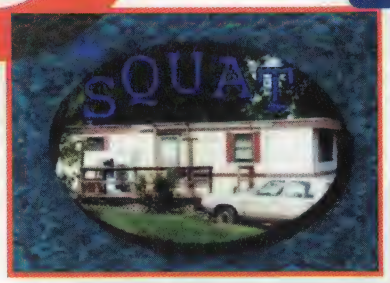
So what prompted all this mimicry? *IU* decided to take a peek behind the scenes with some of these site spoofers.

REAL THING: The Spot,
http://www.thespot.com
PARODY: The Squat,
http://theory.physics.missouri.edu/~georges/Josh/squat/
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: The physically beautiful, vapid main characters begged to have their perfections made imperfect by this shameless lampoon of the insipid storyline.
HOW THE PARODY COMPARES: Took fab beachfront lifestyle and turned it into an endless episode of *Roseanne* set in a trailer park.
IRONY FACTOR: The trailer park people write better.

Suspiciously similar to a combination of *Melrose Place* coupled with *The Real World* with a dash of *Baywatch* cheesecake, The Spot offers 'net users the daily episodic ventures of 20-somethings in a wild and crazy, inner-reflective Web

doesn't *suck*, maybe it *blows!!!*

by Crystal Waters!!!



world that we all read *because we can relate, man.* Oh yeah, and there's lots of butt shots. What more could we ask for?

Enter The Squat, the cozy life and times of four down-and-out folk livin' in a lovely double wide. "The Spot seemed a bit too high and mighty and needed to be wrestled down in the mud with the rest of us," says The Squat's Lynn Kyle, who plays Valvoline (currently, the only woman in the crowd). "The Squat seemed to hit The Spot perfectly."

Greg Zguta attributes The Squat idea to Josh Hancik, who admired The Spot when it launched ("Boy, were *we* naive!" Zguta says). The pair, along with Georges Saab, Beth Kopine and Betsy Smith began the spoof, says Zguta, as a "sort of summer hobby." (Kopine and Smith left the trailer last summer; Kyle moved in last November.) But then the The Squat started to develop its own cult following, proven in its active bulletin board section. Their little hobby also attracted a lot of attention from the media and Web users. Zguta estimates The Squat has received more than 100,000 hits since last July, when the site was added to Netscape's What's New and Yahoo's Cool Links.

E-mail pours in from fans and dissenters alike. "About once a month, I tend to get a proposal," quips Kyle. "Sometimes even for marriage."

REAL THING: ***suck***, http://www.suck.com/
PARODIES: ***blow***, http://www.deconstruction.com/blow/
sock, http://www.public.coe.edu/~mouser/derbis/sock/sock.html
WHY IT DESERVED TO BE PARODIED: The daily doses of cynicism and criticism are funny as long as *you* aren't mentioned.
HOW THE PARODIES COMPARE: *Blow* takes the cynicism and points it in an interesting direction. *Sock* just points.
IRONY FACTOR: *Sock*, or "*suck* for dummies" really may be necessary for some Web surfers.
HIGHLIGHTS: *Blow*'s rant about the Sucksters hanging out on AOL.

A friend of ours told us that he liked *suck* because it was double-spaced. Luckily for its impersonators, this makes *suck* easy to emulate. Steal a bit of code and you've got an instant *suck*-alike.

Blow's creator takes the cynical tone of *suck* and, using his own wit, creates an intriguing set of commentary on topics ranging from censorship to Java security flaws. While it may have started as a parody, *blow* stands up on its own thanks to its humorous biting attitude toward technology and those who use it.

sock, on the other hand, proudly bills itself as "*suck* For Dummies," and goes on to provide newbies with step-by-step instructions for accessing and understanding its namesake. Jason Kottke, *sock*'s founder, says the "For Dummies" series of books from IDG Publishing were his first inspiration, especially since some of their offerings such as *CD-ROMs For Dummies* seemed so obviously useless. "*Suck* was an easy target, since it is nothing more than an article and a few pictures," Kottke says. "Who needs an explanation for that?"

Well, obviously a few people do; even the folks who read *suck*. When *sock* was featured on *suck* on March 14 issue (archived at www.suck.com/dynasuck/96/03/14/), the site received more than 1,700 hits that day.

REAL THING: **Netscape,** http://www.netscape.com
PARODY: **Petscape,** http://www.hisurf.com/petscape/
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: While Netscape has the most full-featured browser, its site is butt-ugly.
HOW THE PARODY COMPARES: In content, Petscape rules pet resources the way Netscape rules Web resources. Petscape is much cuter, though.
IRONY FACTOR: Netscape highlighted Petscape on its What's New page, then turned around and filed legal complaints against the site for trademark infringement.
HIGHLIGHTS: The typos in the stiff legal letter sent from Netscape, found on Petscape's home page.

Hotwired looks down its nose; *Underwired* lifts and separates

Petscape, a site dedicated to pets and pet lovers created by the "Coconut Boyz," is chock-full of animal pages, resources, links and news offered in a format that matches Netscape's home page almost to perfection. And if you're a pet

lover or owner (yes, even of odd pets, such as sea monkeys or ant farms), this site should be at the same level of priority as Netscape in your bookmarks.

However, Petscape's experiences outline why creating a parody isn't all fun and similar source coding.

"We had the site up for about four months and then one day we got an e-mail from a www.petscape.com telling us to stop listing our site as Petscape since we would be in violation of some sort of copyright," says Scott Yoshinaga, the site's creator. "We changed our site name to the Original Petscape and we stopped listing (it in places on the Web). But in three days we were listed on Netscape's What's New pages. I am pretty sure the petscape.com people were not too thrilled, but we honestly had nothing to do with it."

Netscape's lawyers started their legal posturing in April. If Yoshinaga complies, you'll see a dramatically different site by the time this issue hits the newsstand. "[Netscape] asked us to redesign our site and name because it is infringing on their GUI [graphical user interface] and name. We have till May 10, 1996, to comply. It was a very formal letter and not threatening in any way. I suppose we now must change it all."

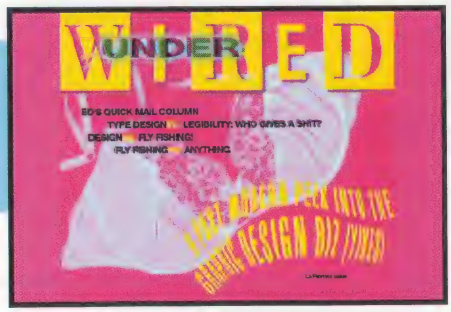
REAL THING: **NCSA's What's New,** http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/Mosaic/Docs/whats-new.html
PARODY: **What's Snooze?,** http://www.c3f.com/whasnooz.html
What Snooze II, http://www.c3f.com/snooze2.html
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: Everything is new, so why bother?
HOW THE PARODY COMPARES: Both sites have comparable graphic flair for the non-dramatic.
IRONY FACTOR: The mock sites listed are 10 times better than most real sites.
HIGHLIGHTS: Make sure you read the URLs carefully.

Tired of reading about what's new on the Web? Too bad. What's Snooze introduces its site with the disclaimer: "This page contains a list of links to the hundreds of thousands of new Web pages that have been created and announced in the last 10 minutes. The list is updated each 11 minutes, and the previous listings (now ancient history) are immediately removed and placed on our inaccessible archives server." This site's so hot, the author had to create a second version, What's Snooze II. The double farce highlight treasures such as made-up sites "Learn Desperanto in a Week" (that's the universal language of despair) and "Better Faster Be$t$eller$" (a site devoted to fictional books such as *Al Franken is From Mars*, *Deepak Chopra is from Venus*, by William S. Burroughs).

REAL THING: ***HotWired***, http://www.hotwired.com
PARODY: ***UnderWired***, http://www.covesoft.com/underwired/
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: Oh, come on. If you really need to be told, you are just *sooo* uncool.
HOW THE PARODY COMPARES: *HotWired* looks down its nose; *UnderWired* lifts and separates.
IRONY FACTOR: Marci and Bill admit that they're clueless.
HIGHLIGHTS: Its "Fetid" section—Techno-lust for things that smell really, really bad.

Who would deign to mock the mighty *HotWired*? Marci Mansfield-Fickes and Bill Pulver would, and they do in their "lighthearted but pretentious" *UnderWired*. The site features humorous and biting articles such as "Type Design vs. Legibility—Who really gives a shit?" and its Overtired/UnderWired section (worth it if only to view the accompanying clever graphics). Mansfield-Fickes and Pulver, who both work for a design firm near Philadelphia, were inspired to spoof the site after attending a lecture by *HotWired*'s two designers shortly after its launch. "Two things immediately impressed us. One, the incredible potential the Web had as a communications tool that we could immediately hook into. And two, how incredibly pretentious and taken with themselves [the *HotWired* designers] were."

The best historical feature about *UnderWired* may be how it got its name. "We were in a meeting in the conference



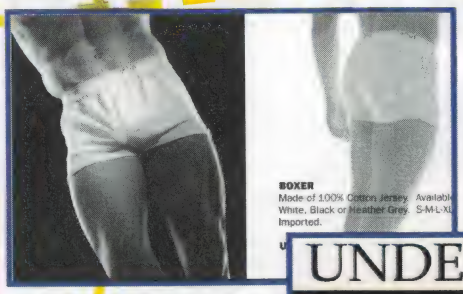
room one afternoon at work," explains Pulver. "You see, the conference room is kind of poorly ventilated. That particular summer day was getting pretty warm. Marci found herself feeling a little light-headed, and when the chest pains started, she had pretty much convinced herself she was having a heart attack.

"Making the usual excuses, she absented herself and went straight to the emergency care unit, where the attending physician told her that her symptoms were not a heart attack, but a combination of heat, poor ventilation and pressure on her rib cage caused by her underwire bra.

"Not being real bright, Marci comes back to the studio and tells me this." Needless to say, *UnderWired* was a natural name choice, and *HotWired* a natural target. The rest is yet history.

REAL THING: **2(x)ist Underwear Catalog,** http://www.digex.net/2xist/catalog.html
PARODY: **2(b)Furry,** http://members.aol.com/timberwoof/2bFurry/index.html
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: It's too sexy for its shirt.
HOW THE PARODY COMPARES: It's too sexy for its fur.
IRONY FACTOR: It appeals to much the same audience.
HIGHLIGHTS: Hmmm. It's hard to choose between the Y-back thong and Contour Pouch Brief.

While we've never known anyone to actually order anything from the 2(x)ist Web site, we do know people who like to gawk at the pictures, especially that nice fellow in the Y-back thong. But while



the pictures of all those ribbed tummies and tight butts may entice, Michael "Timberwoof" Roeder found the page got old quickly since it seemingly hasn't changed since its inception.

So during a rush of spare time ("meaning I was unemployed," he clarifies), Roeder was hit with the idea to create 2(b)Furry. "It was then a matter of putting the images together, getting some of my stuffies to agree to be photographed, manipulating images from the 2(x)ist site, and writing the HTML." Poof, we've now got a resource for teddy bear underwear and the bear in the Y-back thong should not to be missed. Bear in mind, the site takes credit card orders, but accepts only Furrican Express, MasterFur, FURA or Discofur.

REAL THING: **Point Communications Top 5% of All Web Sites,** http://www.pointcom.com/gifs/home/
PARODY: **Bottom of the Net Awards,** http://www.halcyon.com/cbutton/bottom95.htm
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: The Point pretends to be an arbiter of quality, but in fact gives out the awards to encourage traffic to their for-profit site.
HOW THE PARODY COMPARES: Just like the Point, virtually anyone can get the award.
IRONY FACTOR: Claiming to be in the Bottom 95% of the Web is probably much more accurate than vice versa.
HIGHLIGHTS: Everyone may already be a winner without buying any magazines.

Doesn't it seem like every site we browse now claims to fall in the Top 5% of the Web? If you're sick of a marketing gimmick masquerading as a merit program, head over to The Bottom of The Net Awards and pick yourself up some esteem along with a nice little emblem for your Web page. All you have to do to win an award (such as The InfoSuck Fool Site) is to answer a few questions correctly. If you pass, tag that GIF right on to your page. Sample questions include "Did your spouse give you a 'wedgie' while you were sleeping?," "Can you hum 'God Save the Queen' or 'O Canada?'" and "Does the 'Father of Shareware' have to provide links to your page so that you can get an occasional hit?"

You understand that odd question when you realize that Conrad Knopf, the propagator of the Bottom awards page is brother to "Shareware Father" Jim Knopf.

That relation was part of his inspiration for the site. Conrad was simply jealous.

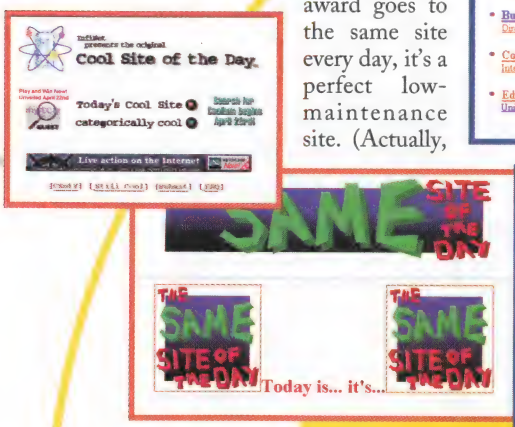
"I saw all the awards that my brother had won," says Conrad. "Everywhere I surfed, awards, awards, awards. I decided to create my own award so that I wouldn't be left out. Then I decided to create another award so that I could display two of them. Then three, then four. I was possessed with award creation." Now anyone can share Knopf's awards, provided they've never won any others.

Ironically, Knopf now gives out a "real" award, billed as the Warm Award. Only sites that could be considered neither hot and nor cool qualify to win. Or, as the award-winning Conrad Knopf puts it, "This is an award for the fairly decent."

REAL THING: Cool Site of the Day, http://cool.infi.net
PARODY: The Same Site of the Day, http://www.pnx.com/falken/samesite.html
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: Made everyone want to espouse what *they* thought was cool by setting up similar sites.
HOW THE PARODY COMPARES: It looks the same all the time, just like the original.
IRONY FACTOR: That the Same Site of the Day is *actually* cool.
HIGHLIGHTS: Nads.

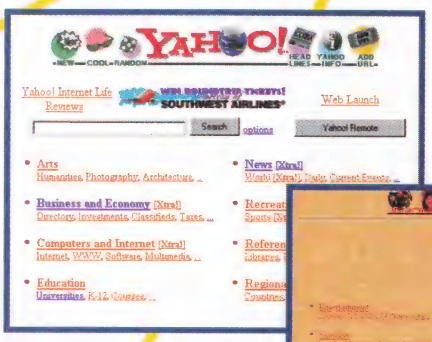
Infinet's Cool Site of the Day may not be the most parodied site on the Web, but it certainly wins the prize for most imitated. That's what bugged "Professor" Falken, a 17-year-old high school senior, who decided to make fun of all the lemming-like copycats.

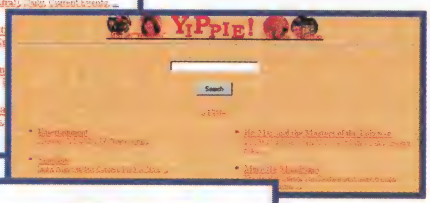
So late one night, Falken created The Same Site of the Day. Since the award goes to the same site every day, it's a perfect low-maintenance site. (Actually, it's *no*-maintenance. "Even if I wanted to change it, I can't," points out Falken). Falken claims he even forgot about it after he put it up, until he started getting e-mail about the site, then found it was listed at Yahoo!, the Point and Magellan. It's even been chosen as a "site of the day" on several occasions, which Falken finds ironic, since he's getting coverage from the very people he's making fun of.

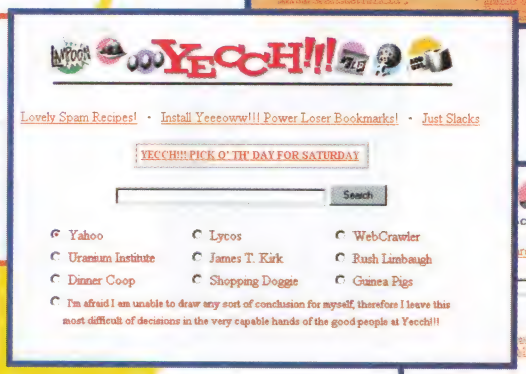


REAL THING: Yahoo! http://www.yahoo.com
PARODY: Gilmoo! http://efg.mit.edu/ Yippee! http://www.awod.com/gallery/rwav/ctyner/ Yecch!!! http://www.yeeeoww.com/yecch/yecchhome.html
WHY IT DESERVES TO BE PARODIED: Its "cool" icon looks like a black bra that only Kate Moss could fit into.
HOW THE PARODIES COMPARES: Um, they don't. They're all just out there searching for something that can't be found.
IRONY FACTOR: One site is thinking of suing Yahoo, not the other way around.
HIGHLIGHTS: Yecch!!!'s Rush Limbaugh search engine.

As one of the first major directional elements on the Web and arguably one of the most influential sites created (see "The 11 Sites that Revolutionized the Internet," *IU* #6), Yahoo! has continually evolved in order to stay also one of the most popular Web destinations.







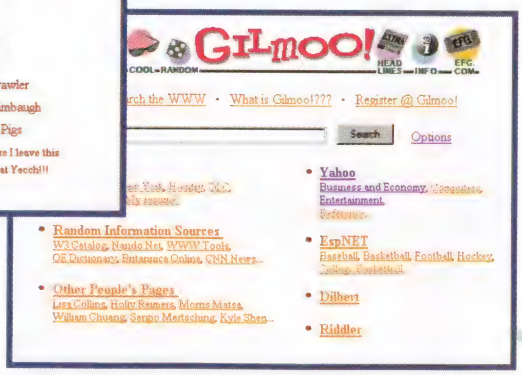
All of the lampoons of Yahoo! have taken on the familiar Yahoo! look, with a bit of a difference in the category structure.

Take Gilmoo!, based on the long-time 'net username of its author, Massachusetts Institute of Technology student Eric Gilmour. Gilmoo! points to sites of Gilmour's interest and offers insight into the author, including a resume and a personal photo menagerie.

Why go to the trouble of Yahooing his site? "It was really just an overnight thing," Gilmour says. "I was procrastinating, studying for a Linear Algebra midterm, and Gilmoo! was born." (If we had to choose between coding and linear algebra, we'd do the same.) Online and paper magazines have covered his creation. It's also one of the sites featured in the Riddler scavenger hunt.

Another Yahoolian site, Yippee!, from the mind of Adam Tyner, was inspired by Yahoo!'s easy-to-navigate organizational structure. Overwhelmed by the amount of info in his site—Tyner collects data on He-Man and the Masters of the Universe, Yoo-Hoo, and Killer Tomatoes among other wide-ranging topics—he decided to change the look of his site from a straight-list format. He liked Yahoo!'s structure, "so I copied it." At press time, Tyner was now considering creating a mock surf shop and a Yahooligans! parody soon.

However, the site most closely resembling the Yahoo! searchable structure and categories is the relatively new Yecch!!! site, one of the many parody sites produced by Yeeeoww! Digital Lampoon master Pat Campbell. He attributes the entire lampooning venture to "reading too much *Mad* magazine when I was young." Yecch!!! not only looks like Yahoo!, but it finds the worst possible stuff on the Web and offers viewers the choice to browse around or search for topics of interest. Campbell adds that his team is dedicated to the site, "and take great pains to come up with a stinkin' Web Site o' th' day every single stinkin' day." His fine collection of Web wretchedness receives roughly 500 hits a day. At one point, Yecch!!! was on Yahoo's cool list, but it's since been unceremoniously removed. This snub has stumped and angered Campbell. "Needless to say, we're gonna sue their ass," he says.



Life wouldn't be complete without a site dedicated to listing parody sites, and Bob Allison is the guy to do it. For a list of Web site and product parodies, don't miss the Boba World's ***It's Time to Parody Site*** *at* http://miso.wwa.com/~boba/parody.html.

A note to the uninitiated: a zine is to a magazine as a freshly-picked apple is to a Hostess Fruit Pie.

spotlight

A closer look at this month's #1 site

John Labovitz's E-zine List

Zines are the home-grown fruit of the self-publishing revolution: always fresh, often tasty, and sporadically half-baked. These "little magazines" are "generally produced by one person or a small group of people, done often for fun or personal reasons, and tend to be irreverent, bizarre, and/or esoteric," says this month's spotlight subject, John Labovitz.

Here's the rub: Paper is expensive, and distribution can be a nightmare. The Web, however, has offered an affordable outlet to writers wishing to voice their opinions, and the electronic fruits of zine labor have been christened "e-zines."

Labovitz, a good-natured soul, followed his nomadic instincts back in 1991 when he started the print zine, *Crash*. This free-wheeling project was a database of people who liked to visit people and receive visitors in turn. It suggested places to sleep, fun things to do in various cities, cheap eats, eco-tours, alternative communities and just generally promoted travel as a healthy part of life. In 1993, Labovitz decided to put *Crash* online. "We typed it up, and I put it up on my FTP site, and then didn't know what to do next. I put out a query, asking if there were any directories. Everyone said 'no,' but that they'd be interested if someone like me started one. We never got much further on the zine because all my time went into the list." Labovitz agrees that this is the genesis of many useful Web projects: the realization that if you don't make the effort, no one will. "Then," he sighs, "it kind of consumes you."

Labovitz, a self-described tech geek and body-piercing devotee, says that he goes in and out of the zine scene. "I'll be really, really interested in it for awhile, but then I'll kind of get overloaded, then give it a few months' break and then get back into it...I keep toying with the idea of putting out some ziney stuff, but I've been procrastinating."

Does John visit every zine that's newly listed on his site? "Nope," he laughs. "The default is that I just put it up. I can usually tell from the description enough about whether it's a zine or not, because that's *occasionally* a problem." The two major disqualifications for a listing are a site"s lack of editorial substance and static content. Labovitz, a freelance programmer for Global Network Navigator, hesitates to name a fave publication. "I don't actually read a lot of the e-zines, because I do a lot of work on the Web, and the idea of sitting down then for awhile and trying to read stuff is a little bit difficult."

Labovitz warns e-zine publishers "not to assume that just because you put it on the Web, it's going to be inherently better, or even the same, as putting out a print zine." He feels that this mindset only leads to disappointment. He does offer some tips for successful zine marketing. "If you find people who are interested in your zine, then make a mailing list. When you have a new issue or updates, then send out e-mail. Someone who gets an e-mail message saying, 'Hey, my zine's been updated, here's the URL,' they'll be a lot more likely to come and look at it."

In three years, the E-Zine List has swelled from 25 listings to nearly 1,000. Clearly, the world of electronically distributed zines is thriving. Labovitz feels that this is "an indicator of the huge growth in popularity of not only the 'net in general, but grass-roots/amateur/personal publishing as well." He updates the site monthly, when he accumulates several listings. "I keep meaning to make up a whole form system, so people can submit online, but, ahhh...whatever. I get somewhere between one and three submissions a day," he says. The whole process, from origin to execution, has seemingly been a long and winding road for the affable Labovitz. "I have a whole Perl script. This huge, ancient Perl script that generates the whole Web page. And every couple months I take it all apart and I break it, then change it around again." He laughs. "My friend told me I do white-trash programming. I have the program up on blocks in the front yard." O

Adventurer John Labovitz in his current home, Seattle, holding the Space Needle in his hand.

http://www.meer.net/~johnl/e-zine-list/index.html

Conspiracy and cover-up or just one crazed ex-Commie?

On the 'net, the search goes on for what really happened to the fallen JFK

The whole business took only a moment, captured for posterity in an all-too-familiar grainy color home movie. Shots stung the morning air, then John F. Kennedy slumped in the convertible. More than 30 years later, many still grasp for the answers to what really happened that day in Dallas.

Endless possiblities have been examined by the Dallas Police, the FBI, the CIA, the Warren Commission, journalists, professors, crime buffs, conspiracy theorists, supermarket tabloids psychics-for-hire and Oliver Stone. This little piece of history seems fated for perpetual interpretation, like a never-ending game of *Clue*.

But for most of the three decades since the shooting, the amount of information publicly available, well, at least *easily*

By Kathleen Flinn

assassination

available regarding the enigmatic case has been limited. Now the evidence room has shifted to the Web, where you can scan official documents, watch the Zapruder film in QuickTime, read witness interviews in their entirety, view bullet-trajectory graphics and mull a wide range of theories. Yet, even with all this information, creators of the JFK sites say there still should be more.

"I'd wager there are more newsgroups and Web sites devoted to beer than to the JFK case," John Kelin says wryly. Kelin oversees *Fair Play*, a site that offers various viewpoints on what might have happened, most culled from his own research. Still, Kelin is encouraged by the increase in JFK 'net activity, which he credits to the explosive growth of users coupled with heightened interest in the case. Combine that with "the belief, shared by so many, that something is rotten in the state of the union," Kelin says, "and you've got a hot topic for the 'net."

Debra Conway, creator of the site *November in Dallas*, calls those on the 'net "people with strong convictions, unafraid to take a step into the unknown. If the unknown also means questioning the official story on the JFK case, then so be it."

Most of those who put together the better JFK sites tend to be thorough, organized and dedicated to the belief that the Internet is probably our last hope for finally uncovering the truth. In the past, the public might have relied on the investigative arms of the media to get to the bottom of the controversy. But the JFK Webmasters agree that the mainstream press blew it when it came to seriously investigating a possible cover-up.

"If there's one truism in this case, it's that the media has performed very poorly *vis a vis* the JFK case," Kelin says. "Why? I don't know. What do they usually do wrong? The chief sin is to unquestioningly parrot the official Lone Nut theory."

Of course, not everyone on the Web thinks that the Warren Commission was a bunch of ninnies. John McAdams, a professor at Marquette University in Milwaukee, is the creator of the only personal page we found that offers substantial evidence supporting the conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald *did* act alone.

His interest was initially fueled by Stone's controversial 1991 film, *JFK*. "About that time, I stumbled across Usenet news, and the newsgroup alt.conspiracy.jfk. The group has since become a useless flame fest, but at the time there was real discussion going on," McAdams says. "My participation there provoked me to study the assassination in much greater depth, mostly to refute the conspiracy arguments made on the group."

In case after case, McAdams says he would research some claim and find that the conspiracy buffs were either manipulating

characters

the evidence they presented or based scenarios on information from unreliable sources.

McAdams' support of the Oswald-acted-alone conclusion isn't popular in the conspiracy-infested Internet. So McAdams occasionally receives hostile e-mail from people accusing him of being a paid CIA stooge. "There are some really nasty people out there whose whole sense of identity seems to be tied up in there having been a conspiracy to kill Kennedy. I assume that people with sites that are pro- or anti-Rush Limbaugh, or sites on either side of the abortion issue, get some nasty e-mail too."

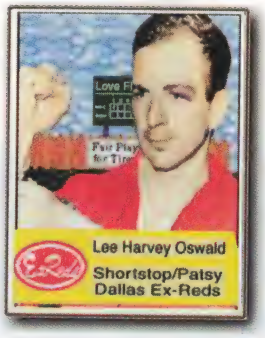
McAdams' views put him in the minority and not just on the 'net. A recent poll found that roughly 80% of Americans believe the assassination was a conspiracy "and that our government lied to us about it," notes Lisa Pease, co-editor of the the e-zine *Probe*.

Yet until the Internet came along, evidence supporting various conspiracy theories was stifled due to its small audience.

"The only outlet for assassination researchers was to either publish books or to write articles in conspiracy-related newsletters. This greatly limited the potential audience and forced an almost inbred system of checks and balances," says Bill Adams, a researcher for the book *Oswald Talked,* published earlier this year by Penquin Books and author of the site *The Truth Is Redacted.*

Adams believes that interest in the case will never die out on the Internet, although it might with the general public as time passes and shifts the 1963 assassination from a current event into a historical one. That's because the 'net, unlike traditional media, can keep the details flowing. Consider the wealth of data available on the history of lunchboxes.

"The Internet is filled with so much disinformation about every possible topic under the sun," says P.M. Phillips, who started the site *The National Conspiracy League.* "What's wrong with a little disinformation about disinformation?"



The Lee Harvey Oswald trading card, available at http://www.infi.net/~knolled/

Looking for Answers?

Many of these sites offer research materials to back up their theories. Some have raw data or official document archives on their sites as well.

Attention to Details BBS
1-909-681-6221.
Oh my goodness, yes, a BBS!

Dealey Plaza
http://theo.sihe.ac.uk:80/~dealeyUK/
A British group dedicated to the event.

DiNardo JFK Collection
gopher://gopher.etext.org/11/Politics/Conspiracy/DiNardo/Kennedy.Assassination
The People's Spellbreaker articles archived.

Executive Action
ftp://ftp.netcom.com/pub/xa/xaction/
An FTP with a number of interesting articles and images.

Failure Analysis
http://www.fail.com/preview/proj_high_jfk/
You can download a QuickTime bit of the re-enactment this company did for a mock Oswald trial for the American Bar Association.

Fair Play
http://rmii.com/~jkelin/fp.html
Site includes well-thought out articles on varying elements regarding the case. Also has Oswald's diary archived, in which he describes his suicide attempt in ill-punctuated detail.

The JFK Assassination Page
http://www.rt66.com/~rharris/jfk.html

JFK Assassination Web Page
http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/MGriffith_2/
A bit sparse at press time, but some interesting discussion here.

JFK Lancer
http://server.snni.com/~jfklancr/
Quarterly publication with updated information on the assassination and a free service tracking down hard-to-find books on the subject.

Louisiana Records
http://www.gnofn.org/~nopl/inv/jfk.htm
The contents of three boxes of files from the Garrison trial.

National Archives and Records Administration
http://www.nara.gov:80/nara/jfk/jfk_search.html
The President John F. Kennedy Assassination Records Collection Reference System is an electronic index to the collection of assassination-related material in the National Archives' 170,873 records.

National Conspiracy League
http://www.infi.net/~knolled/
Lots of subversive links, along with "trading cards" of the major JFK players.

Photographer Tales
http://tulsaweb.com/mall/jfk/Kennedy.htm
This site is essentially an ad to lure you into buying this former photograper's book.

50 Greatest Conspiracies of All Time
http://www.webcom.com/~conspire/jfkfront.html
Offers an interesting take on the 34-year-old cover-up

Unofficial JFK FAQ #15
http://www.webcom.com/~conspire/jfkfaq.html
A loaded, detailed basic primer.

Probe
http://www.webcom.com/~ctka/
Published by Citizens for Truth About the Kennedy Assassination. Is it us, or are all the conspiracists on the same server (Webcom)? Does that mean anything? Is it a conspiracy?

Real History
http://www.webcom.com/~lpease/
Conspiracy a-go-go. Doesn't stop at JFK, but takes on Oklahoma bombing and Iran-Contra.

The Truth is Redacted
http://www.bayarea.net/~restech/index.htm
Put together by a husband-and-wife sleuth team.

>FAQ

Name (real or screen): Andrew Stellman
Age: 21
Gender: Male
Home: Brooklyn, NY
E-mail address: roo@razorwire.com

Each month, we profile people who oversee newsgroups or take on the normally thankless task of compiling Frequently Asked Question files. We do so through a list of standard questions, hence the name FAQ. (Ha!) This month, we talked with the keeper of the FAQ for the fascinatingly odd newsgroup alt.spleen.

Can you explain alt.spleen and its purpose?
Alt.spleen is a group dedicated to the discussion of internal organs, centering around the lymphatic system and its various nodes. The spleen is the most enlightened organ in that system. Alt.spleen is not a particularly serious group, although I have fielded questions ranging from spleens in HIV+ individuals to people recovering from splenectomies.

How did you get involved with the group?
I discovered it one day—it hadn't had a post in a few years, so I revived it.

Do you have a day job? If so, what is it?
I'm a computer programmer at a Wall Street financial firm.

What's a typical conversation thread like?
Q: My spleen is unhappy. It hasn't said anything lately, and has been pretty much mood and gloom for the past few days.
A: Have you tried dusting it with Pledge? (etc.)

What do you think is the most common thing people misunderstand about your group?
I suppose that when someone comes on and says, "Wow, hey, what's this group?" they're misunderstanding the purpose of the newsgroup. Other than that, the subject matter is so wide that pretty much any post pertaining to spleens is relevant.

What's the oddest thing that had to be addressed in the alt.spleen FAQ?
Probably the history of the stiletto. It turns out that back in the middle ages, in Italy, there was an infestation of malaria, which inflames the spleen to several times its original size. A deep jab to an infected spleen with a long spike would result in rupture and cause almost definite death. Hence the origin of the stiletto.

Describe your computer area:
My girlfriend and I just had our apartment renovated, so the entire place is in boxes. The computer area is no exception. We're lucky to be up and running. (If you've ever dealt with construction, you'll know what I mean).

How long do you typically spend maintaining the FAQ in a week?
Not long. It's pretty low maintenance. An hour or two.

What do people do online that makes you mad?
Irrelevant cross-posts. I hate 'em.

What are you wearing?
Shirt, tie, standard Wall Street attire. When I'm at home, I dress gothic—boots, makeup, etc.

Are you a dog person, or a cat person? Or do you prefer an alternative pet?
Definitely a cat person. I've always had cats. Pity, too, since I'm allergic to them. Ah, the sacrifices we make for our feline friends.

What are your favorite places to hang out on the 'net?
Of course, alt.spleen. Also, I've been seen at alt.smouldering.dog.zone, alt.fan.tarka.roadtrip and alt.brain. You can check out my online work at http://www.bline.com/ It's pretty dry and corporate, though. It's for work.

Where do you think the Internet is going and how will it affect society?
We're giving every member of society the ability to be a publisher. Nobody will know the isolation of not being heard, of not being able to voice his or her ideas. We're also breaking down the walls between information providers and the medium for the information. We're making information a lot easier to access; it no longer originates from a single point. This is important: A well-informed public is an empowered public.

The Internet is finally at the point where it's recognized as a threat to fascism and politics that thrive on misinformation. It's also potentially dangerous for different reasons. It's becoming more and more difficult to differentiate between information and misinformation. A misinformed public is a dangerous public (think McCarthy).

What would people be surprised to find out about you?
Some people would be surprised to find out that I work on Wall Street and wear a tie. Others would be surprised that I dress like a freak when I'm not working. People are too superficial, don't you think?

Finally, why is alt.spleen important?
It's important to me—it's a place to vent my spleen.

Dershow

A courtroom MacGyver of sorts, Harvard law professor and esteemed attorney Alan Dershowitz has come to be known as America's most famous lawyer of "last resort," and has counseled some of the nation's most high-profile defendants over the last two decades, including O.J. Simpson, Mike Tyson, Claus von Bulow, Jim Bakker, Leona Helmsley and Michael Milken.

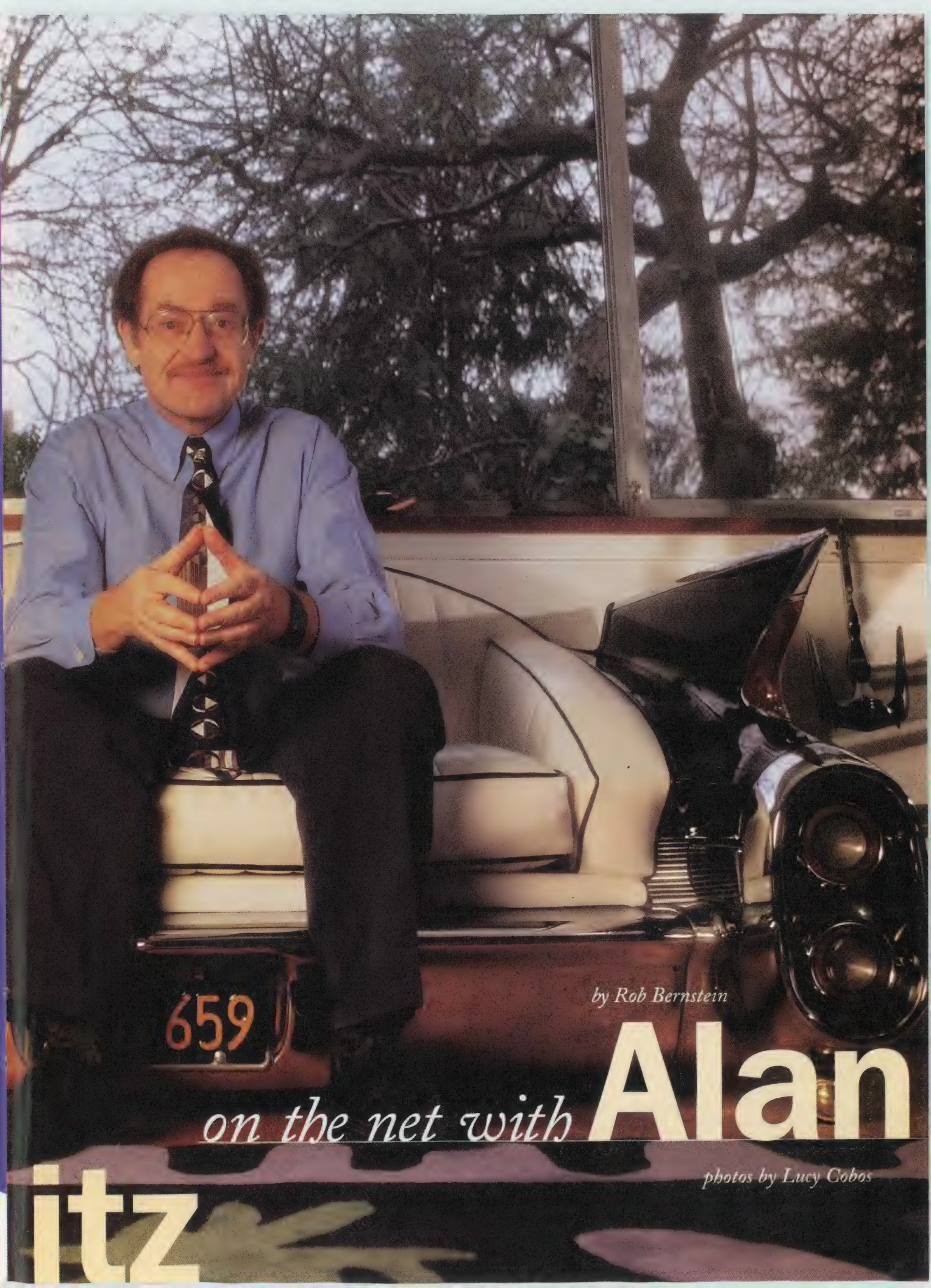
Having recently completed his new book *Reasonable Doubts* about the Simpson case, the prolific author is already busy writing his next hardback and is currently featured on his own talk-radio show aptly called Dershowitz!, a syndicated program from multimedia venture SW Networks that can be accessed via the Web, in part, at **http://swnetworks.com**.

IU was able to catch up with the law scholar this month (and fortunately receive free counsel) to discuss concerns over current legal issues surrounding the Internet. In regard to matters of online hate speech, copyright and trademark infringement, privacy rights, international network regulation and the hotly disputed Communications Decency Act, Professor Dershowitz lays down the law and gives it to us straight.

Internet Underground: Can you tell me a little bit about your experience with the Internet, and do you spend much time on the World Wide Web or sending e-mail?

Alan Dershowitz: I do not myself. My office does, but my interest in the Internet grows largely out of the fact that I am a strong advocate of freedom of communications, freedom of speech, freedom of expression. I think the major issues of freedom of expression in the next century are going to grow out of the new technologies. The First Amendment was drafted in 1793 at a time when freedom of speech meant Tom Paine standing on a street corner handing out primatively printed copies of Common Sense for a penny an issue. That is so far from the communications superhighway that we are going to experience in the next century that I am concerned that the spirit of the First Amendment may be abrogated by concerns about the new technology.

IU: The Communications Decency Act has certainly raised many concerns among Internet users about civil rights and freedom of speech issues. In the past, it seems the courts have followed a "technology will lead and the law will follow" mentality. In your opinion, do you think Congress has rushed into things with this technology and have they made a mistake in ban-



by Rob Bernstein

on the net with Alan

photos by Lucy Cobos

jtz

ning "indecent" material from the Internet?

AD: Yes, I do. I think Congress has overreacted and has responded with a blunderbuss rather than with a scalpel. There should be, on the Internet, an ability for two people to communicate with each other confidentially without the government in any way interfering, much like you and I have the right to talk over the telephone or I have the right to send you a first class letter. That's part of what should be available and that should be governed by one set of rules. Another set of rules necessarily has to apply when you're dealing with open communication, bulletin boards, that are equally accessible to everybody regardless of age.

According to Dershowitz, Congress responded to the CDA with a blunderbuss instead of a scalpel.

IU: What then are Congress' options in regulating the Internet?

AD: There are two options, or several options—one is to bring all the Internet users down to the standards of the youngest, most vulnerable user and say nothing goes on the Internet unless it's suitable for children. Imagine applying that same standard to books. There was actually a case on that in New York that went to the United States Supreme Court 30 or 40 years ago when New York passed a statute requiring that all books published or certain kinds of books published in New York be suitable for children. And the Supreme Court said, 'No, we can't mortgage the First Amendment to the interests of children.' The alternative is to ban children from the Internet and say the Internet is an adults-only media of communication and if you don't like it, send mail and make phone calls. There is a third alternative and that is for the Internet, and this is my preferred alternative, not to be censored at all, but for children not to be able to have access to it without expressed parental permission so that parents make the decision whether they want their children on the uncensored Internet.

IU: The Internet has been rather anarchic up until now and people have been stealing copyrighted graphics and documents from one another's sites; the concept of libel, it seems, has been rejected by many early adopters of the Internet...

AD: Let's be clear. The concept of libel depends on what you're talking

about. If you post something on the Internet, there's no question that I can sue you. The question is whether or not the "owners" of the Internet can be sued for allowing you to libel me. So the law of libel applies, but it doesn't apply fully.

IU: It just seems that people on the Internet speak with a rather loose tongue, and at times, outrageously. People have enjoyed being able to say whatever they want without repercussions on the Web. I think some people would argue that the law has no place on the Web, that in fact on the Internet, anarchy is law.

AD: In the end, I think what's going to happen is we're going to develop many marketplaces and we'll probably end up with a lawless Internet and with a law-governed Internet. We'll probably have an adults-only Internet and an Internet available for children. The technology certainly permits for a multiplicity of highways. We don't have to have only one information superhighway. It may be less efficient, but the first amendment wasn't designed to promote efficiency.

IU: Assuming that there will be some form of regulation on the Internet, it seems there's a problem in that the people who use it don't necessarily know the law well enough not to break it.

AD: That's going to be an adjustment problem. I think that is true of any new technology, but we have to learn to adapt to the law. The problem is today, nobody knows what the law of the Internet is; not the most sophisticated lawyer or media expert today knows what is or what is not permissible. Words like "indecency" don't communicate very much and leave open an enormous amount of governmental discretion. The other problem is, and what I don't want to see happen, is what happened with, well, we won't name the companies...but certain companies who'll say, "Listen, we will censor racist speech, we will censor pornography but we will not censor Holocaust denial speech." Picking and choosing what they will and what they won't censor opens up enormous problems of selective censoring and selective legitimating. You don't want private communication companies using government-operated airwaves to make decisions which invidiously discriminate against one group or another.

IU: That's interesting because the Simon Wiesenthal Center, some months ago, spoke out against the use of the Internet by certain fringe groups spreading messages of hate and intolerance to the world. But this seems to be working, as you said, contrary to rights provided in the First Amendment. What do you think of their concern as far as who can publish and what can be published on the Web?

We ought to be *confident* enough in our abilities to answer bad speech with good speech, not to *demand* censorship.

AD: I understand their concern, but I disagree with them in the end. I think, in the end, the best answer to bad speech is good speech. Let's debate these issues. Let's have all sides represented. Let's make sure that liberty beats tyranny in the marketplace of ideas. We ought to be confident enough in our abilities to answer bad speech with good speech, not to demand censorship. The Internet is very powerful. For the first time, it really means that neo-Nazis in Europe and the former Soviet Union can communicate effectively with neo-Nazis in Australia and in Montana. The answer to that is not censorship. Censorship has never succeeded in preventing bigotry. The answer is to take more energetic steps to countering, on the 'net, this kind of bigotry.

IU: You mentioned how the Internet is powerful in that it allows people to effectively communicate to the world. What do you think then about regulating something that affects an international community? Should we handle things by treaty? Can Amsterdam and Beijing realistically come to an accord in regard to pornography on the Web?

AD: It's not unique to the Web. It's more pressing on the Web, but today we have the same problems with television. Canada restricts coverage of trials so Canadians tune into U.S. television to watch their Canadian trials being reported about. Jordan and Israel listen to each other's television. In the end, there will have to be some treaties, but the United States cannot become signatory to a treaty which restricts the First Amendment rights of its citizens. In the end, I think there will have to be a censorship-free information superhighway, but it may not be the only one and it may, as I say, mean multiple technology. And I don't think that's such a terrible thing even if it decreases efficiency and increases inconvenience. Nobody ever said that freedom comes cheap.

IU: Is it going to make it difficult for defense lawyers, as yourself, to defend a client with all of the case's particulars being made available, not just to the nation, but to the world?

AD: No, I think you have to live to learn with technology, you have to learn to adapt to technology, you have to learn to understand that the marketplace's ideas are international and very quick and just learn how to be a better lawyer in the face of it. You can't expect to try 21st-century cases on 19th-century technology. We also use the Internet as lawyers tremendously. The Simpson case was the first trial of the 21st-century. I was hooked into the courtroom. I was able to fax material to the courtroom immediately, I was able to access their computer programs, be able to be connected by modem. I was virtually in the courtroom. My presence in the courtroom was a virtual reality.

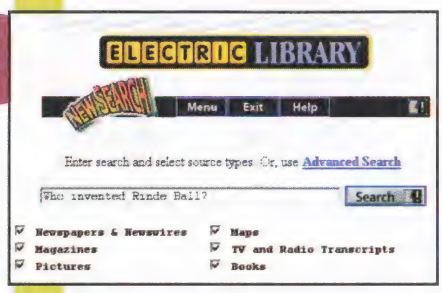
IU: How do you see the Internet changing the way law is practiced in this country, in light of that case, and what about the notion of being able to access legal research at the touch of a button?

AD: It's not only to access legal research, but we can access the transcript. It's much more effective in cross examination. You can push a word into the program and find out what somebody said a year earlier. It really does require lawyers to become much more sophisticated about electronic media.

IU: Lawyers who don't get wired soon, do you think they're going to be at a severe disadvantage?

AD: Definitely, I'm already feeling it.

Anyone who has ever had access to the vast Lexis/Nexis database knows the unbridled joy of having, seemingly, every written and spoken word over the past decade at their fingertips. Well, welcome to Lexis lite: the Electric Library by Infonautics. Available via the Web at **http://www.elibrary.com** the Electric Library allows subscribers to search the archives of thousands of sources from the more mainstream *Los Angeles Times*, *New Republic* and NPR's *All Things Considered* to the slightly more obscure *Boston Irish Reporter*, *The Magazine of Food, Farm & Resource Issues* and *Ranger Rick*. You can conduct searches by keyword or you can even pose a question to the



service. The process is far from perfect though. For example, when I asked, "Who was the 12th president of the USA?" the service brought up a story about the U.S. Olympic swim trials. Rephrased as "Who was the 12th U.S. president?," however, I was rewarded with a dictionary entry for Zachary Taylor. At press time, the Electric Library was offering a free trial, but at $9.95 per month the service is still well-priced for students, reporters and others who conduct research on a regular basis.

— Otto Renschovowitcz

Electric Library
by Infonautics
$9.95/per month

★★★★

If you haven't read our story on Tempest technology (see page 42), you might want to check it out before reading on. Phillip Finch, author of the best-seller *Sugarland*, uses the obscure technology in his latest novel, *f2f*.

For whatever reason, this is the fourth thriller involving serial killers and the Internet that we've come across in the short history of *IU*. As if Congress hasn't already scared everyone enough, American writers are making sure readers are aware that the dangers of technology extend far beyond drive-ruining viruses or frustratingly difficult Netscape plug-ins.

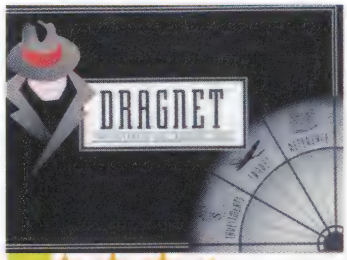
The action in *f2f* begins with an ominous message posted to an online community that sounds suspiciously like the Well in San Francisco (also the city in which this story takes place). The novel begins with a macabre message posted to a bulletin board: "Your life is in jeopardy. As you read this, you are within reach of a murderer..." To the six who respond, mostly with flames, the writer replies publicly with another ominous threat, "You have been noticed." The killer then systematically goes about hunting each responder, tracking them down in their non-virtual worlds for deadly face-to-face encounters.

The book chillingly illustrates that, while you're safe behind a screen name, you're still vulnerable in the real world. Each of us leaves an electronic trail behind, whether we're aware of it or not. The story also demonstrates a very believable account of a 'net stalking that may not stray very far from the truth. (As if you hadn't figured *that* out by reading this issue.) Finch writes with a lean, fast-moving style that reads not unlike a movie script. (Incidentally, the book jacket notes that *f2f* will soon be made into a film by Touchstone Pictures.) And, like a Hollywood movie, the ending wraps up a little too neatly and dramatically. All in all though, it's a good read.

—Kathleen Flinn

f2f
by Phillip Finch
Bantam Books
$21.95

★★★★



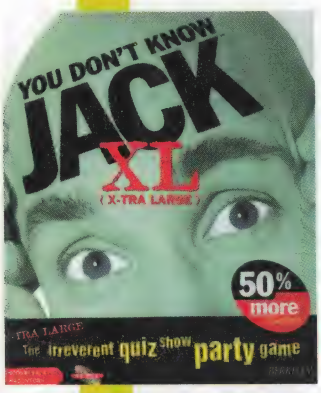
★★★½

Dragnet
by OnBase Technology
$39.95

Macintosh-based Dragnet 1.03, a URL and e-mail management program from OnBase Technology, Inc., lives up to its claim of being "The ultimate 'net address book." This database manager and address book works with your Web browser to help you organize your bookmarks and e-mail addresses in an easy-to-use and customized drag-and-drop interface. A sample database for URL management and e-mail address storage is available with pre-stored bookmarks of computer sources, magazines, entertainment sites and more. Once you learn how to use the sample, you can customize your own database relatively easily, importing and exporting your bookmarks from other programs. A useful feature of Dragnet is the option to search using text strings within the database. You can also limit these searches within select categories. The program supports more than just URLs. Dragnet impressively organizes e-mail and Internet protocols such as FTP. It's a fantastic storage and organization tool. Now if it could only do something with your cluttered desk.

—Lauren Gonzalez

e w s



★★★★★

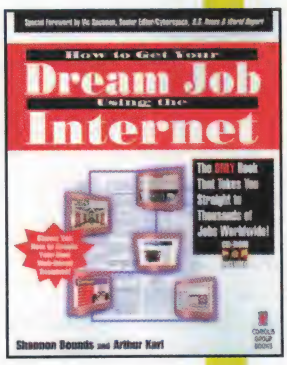
You Don't Know Jack XL

BY BERKELEY SYSTEMS

$39.99

I'm not really sure why Berkeley Systems sent us a copy of You Don't Know Jack XL, but I sure am thankful they did. Admittedly, the CD-ROM has nothing to do with the Internet, but that's never stopped us before from alerting you to peripheral products that tickle our fancy. The basics: You Don't Know Jack is a quiz game with an attitude. The strength of the game falls with the questions, reminiscent of the queries from the late '80s MTV game show *Remote Control*. Preceding each question, a player chooses from three hilarious categories. A sample subject: "Jack Tripper and Schoolyard Tom Foolery." And a sample question: "Imagine, if you will, a hilarious episode of *Three's Company* in which the girls give Jack a budgie. What is a budgie?" You Don't Know Jack XL comes with 1,200 different questions—more than enough to play the game dozens of times with minimal repetition. The questions are skewed toward subjects of pop culture, with a healthy mix of history and science thrown in. Oddly, after playing several games, we found that the most recurring subject matter was of Boo-Berry cereal. That fixation aside, I can't recommend You Don't Know Jack enough—go buy it today. Don't take our word for it—for a free demo version, visit the Berkeley Systems site at **http://www.berksys.com/www/promotions/freedemos.html**

—Alex Gordon



★★★★

How to Get Your Dream Job Using the Internet

BY SHANNON BOUNDS AND ARTHUR KARL

CORIOLIS GROUP BOOKS

$29.99

Considering my dream job is to play shortstop for the Chicago Cubs, I was a bit skeptical that *How to Get Your Dream Job Using the Internet* could live up to its title. Well, as it turns out, there's nothing in the exhaustive 328 pages that will help me hit a major league curve. There is, however, plenty of information in the book on using the vast resources available on the 'net to one's advantage during the job hunting process. I'm content in my position as the managing editor of this fine publication, but should I need to seek employment, I could do a lot worse than using the tips in this book. Some of the better sections include: a list of hundreds of sites that have up-to-the-minute job listings, a guide to schmoozing online and a list of tips for putting your resume on the Web. The book comes packaged with a CD-ROM with helpful programs for neophytes, like Eudora and QuickTime, plus resume templates and direct links to sites. If it's a good job you're after, this how-to isn't a bad $30 investment—and after all it's tax-deductible.

—Alex Gordon

(Behind Closed Doors)

403 Forbidden

by the Flogmaster

Erotic Disobedience

HAMMERING OUT FANTASIES ABOUT SPANKING ON THE 'NET

I have been fascinated by spankings for as long as I can remember. Although, as a child they filled me with weak-kneed terror (even when they were happening to someone else), but even in my fear I was intrigued by the process: the threat, the potential, the stomach-churning reality of being turned upside down, the loss of control, the intense pain, brief but persuasive, the occasional aftermath of tears and warmth of forgiveness.

Growing up I kept these feelings to myself. I never told a soul, but developed selective hearing, perking up my ears at the mere mention of the S-word. The word would jump out as me, whether it was a casual, overheard reference in real life conversation, as snippet of dialogue in a film or appeared in a newspaper or magazine article.

I thought that I was abnormal or perverse for being obsessed with such an odd topic. I did not *feel* abnormal, but instinctively I knew not to reveal my secret to anyone, lest I face possible ridicule. Thus I grew to feel slightly alienated.

Then I found the Internet. Behold, here was a community that accepted me with open arms, delighted in my fantasy stories, and shared my innermost desires. Suddenly I was no longer alone. These people understood me, and perhaps more significantly, I understood them. I had found a home.

I felt like weeping with relief. After years of guilty hiding I was now part an anonymous society openly sharing interests and secrets that could not be expressed in any other forum.

Truly the Internet is a revolution in communication as this could never have happened with traditional communication methods. Even if I had known they existed, I would never have dared purchase a spanking magazine. I would never have dared write a letter or place a phone call—I'd be too vulnerable to discovery in such situations. But the 'net is amazing. I can chat with people in any country, post messages that millions can read, and publish my private stories at relatively no cost.

My situation proves that the 'net works for even the oddest interests because it's inherently a private medium. Unlike a magazine or book which advertises its presence by its physical existence, information on the 'net simply waits to be discovered. There's no luring of innocent bystanders via a lurid picture on the cover—readers must enter at their own risk, then browse at the selections.

And what do they find? On my Web site they find erotic writings, primarily spanking fantasies. Stories of consenting adults enjoying sexual play; bizarre fantasies that none of us would condone or even suggest in real life.

It's odd, but it's healthy. Fantasy is part of any relationship, and learning to understand your own fantasies (which may often seem perverted) is important to understanding yourself.

The main thing to stress regarding erotic spanking is that it is *play*. Do not forget that. Much of it involves scenarios and pretense: I'll be the strict schoolmaster and you can be the naughty student, etc. Obviously, those interested in spanking do not suggest abuse, nor would ever condone it; the whole process really only works when both parties consent to take part in the same fantasy. All the stories on my web site and others are exactly that—erotic play and fantasy.

Archived stories by The Flogmaster, many previously posted on alt.sex.stories and alt.spankings, can be found at http://members.aol.com/fm99999/

403 Forbidden is written by guest columnists whose views do not necessarily reflect those of the completely prurient *IU* staff. Our mothers raised us to be upstanding, non-deviant citizens. However, if your interests fall within some darker aspect of the 'net that you would like to share with our readers, write us at IU@mcs.net.

Unnecessary Roughness

(Skewering The Faulty)

NFL LAWYERS

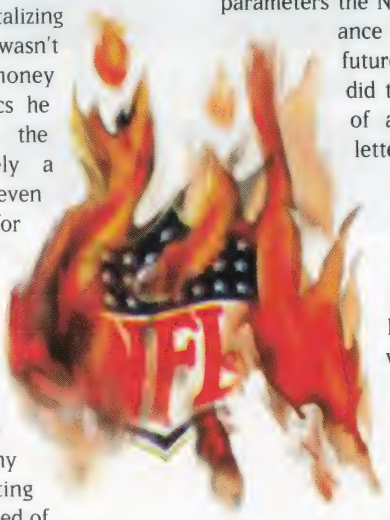
BENCH SPORTS

FANS' SITE

by justin ware

Terry Cannon, like most Webmasters, started his Goldstar site as a hobby. Billed as "Your Internet Home for NFL Graphics," Cannon put up more than 4,300 photos of National Football League players and teams. Most of the pictures were taken from other Internet sites, some were personal scans and a few were e-mailed to him by fans, but according to the NFL, all were illegal. Sixty days after receiving a phone call from the NFL, Cannon's ISP was sent a letter insisting that the site be killed to avoid "such steps as may be necessary to preserve our client's legal rights." Within a day, Goldstar was dead.

Organizations with trademarks worth a damn, like the NFL, obviously have a stake in the Internet. People pay serious cash to license NFL names and logos, and the NFL obviously didn't want visitors to think Goldstar was an official site. But there's a difference between putting up a site relating to a trademarked product and a site capitalizing on one. Cannon wasn't making any money from the graphics he put on his pages; the site was merely a hobby, and he even declined offers for advertising not once, but twice. One would think that, so long as Goldstar clearly declared itself as an unofficial site and removed any language suggesting that the NFL approved of it, the NFL would let the site remain.



Too bad NFL lawyers don't think that way. For them, the fact that there were any pictures up at all was enough cause for action. And this was no idle threat—the NFL could have sought statutory damage awards of up to $100,000 per image, and their past history as a litigant suggests that they might really have done so. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated incident and the parameters the NFL has set for compliance bodes badly for the future of the Web. Not only did they insist on removal of all pictures, but the letter also demanded that Goldstar "cease all further mention of the 'NFL' in any context, including but not limited to any title, heading or any term within the text of the Web site as 'NFL Graphics,' when such use would suggest a connection to the NFL or any of the NFL member teams."

Correct me if I'm wrong, but wouldn't this pretty much kill *any* fan page? If you have a Green Bay Packers Web site and you put up a page with photos of Brett Favre throwing a football and call it "Packer Graphics," according to the NFL, you're infringing on their trademark. Not only that, but even referring to the team in a newsgroup would be an infringement since that would involve "mentioning the NFL in any context." It seems that what the NFL wants is cessation of any discussion of the NFL other than on officially sanctioned sites. The number of places on the Internet where the NFL is mentioned and where trademarked images are shown is enormous. Why would you want to kill them? It seems to me that this is free marketing for the NFL. Okay, so maybe the Dallas Cowboys Haters Home Page **(http://www.buffnet.net/%7Emdoc/antiboys.html)** won't cheer Jerry Jones any, but it isn't illegal, is it?

Trademark and copyright law on the 'net isn't clearly defined or enforced. Pirated graphics dominate the bandwidth, but for the most part, no one cares. Putting up a Simpsons Fan Page and using shots from the show could technically be considered a violation of copyright; in the strictest scenario, you're stealing an image and using it without permission.

But who gains from this kind of "piracy?" Not the Webmaster. No one charges for fan pages.

The logical extension of the NFL's efforts kills fan pages and without fan pages we end up with a bunch of spineless commercial sites. Sure, corporations with valuable property rights have a stake in how their products are displayed, but knee-jerk reactions to images and mentions only kill what makes the Internet so unique: millions of perspectives. The NFL's actions may only signal the beginning of legal woes to come for non-commercial sites, but I hope not. I'd like to put up my own Green Bay Packers home page someday and I'm not too keen on shelling out a hundred grand for a shot of Brett Favre.

WebGuide

the underground guide to what's hot on the web

Everybody lists. Guiness lists. Letterman lists. Who's Who lists. Lists lead us to believe that if someone spent so much time compiling a group of persons, places or things worthy of publication, they must warrant some credibility. WebGuide-type lists are not an exception. Such Web collectives started within 'net magazines, but now other publications are following suit. But be careful of who lists lists. Would you trust a list on the back of a menu? Even a good list only become great when actively used. WebGuide is not a university, but more like a school of hard knocks. We give you some tools, but to learn, you experience the sites yourself. So don't use this WebGuide as a handrail, but as a walking stick. We don't offer you links so you will follow us, but to start you on your own way. Take care as you wander in that virtual terrain. Take action, don't settle for mediocrity. That's a tough order on the Web, one definitely not for the listless.

71 AMUSEMENTS
The great time-waster. If it's useless, fun and will threaten your sanity or employment status, you'll find it here.

72 CATHODECELLULOID
A whirlwind tour of what's on the *other* screens

73 CELEBRITIES
A visual, virtual gossip column

74 THE 3 R'S
Riotous, revealing and revivifying. And you just may learn a thing or two.

75 JOCKS
Sports. Something you must abandon your computer to participate in.

76 NEWSPRINT
All the news that's fit to download

77 BANDWIDTH
What it's all about

78 TUNEAGE
Satisfy your aural fixation

79 MICROCHIPS
Utilitarian *adj.* 1. Stressing usefulness over beauty or other considerations. —*Webster's New World Dictionary*

80 'ZINES
What to read after devouring *Internet Underground*

BRA MAKING TUTORIAL

http://www.funhouse.com/babs/BraFAQ2.txt

It's "uplifting" to learn that you don't have to spend tons of money on undergarments. Yes indeed, you can make your own! This tutorial answers questions every interested bra maker needs to consider, such as, "What makes a properly fitting bra?" The page includes a list of all the materials you'll need to build your own, replete with instructions on how to take proper measurements. Although this site is mostly textual and somewhat dated, it's probably abreast of all the info you'll need.

Webmaster: Babs Woods

★★

THE BUTT GUESSING GAME

http://www.thoughtworks.com/ThoughtWorkers/semcnult/BG/ButtGame.HTM

We can't believe anyone actually plays this game, but, admittedly, we tried it and did really well. An image of four guys standing on a desert road with exposed backsides is situated at the

top of the page. The goal here is to match the guys' backs with separate images of their faces. If you don't guess correctly, nothing happens, and you can try again. If you do match the images, like most Web games, you win nothing more than the glory of being informed that you were right.

Webmaster: Smacie

★

DO IT YOURSELF COUNTRY AND WESTERN SONG

http://sleepy.usmcs.maine.edu/~laferrie/humor/cwsong.html

Mad-Libs meet Garth Brooks. This site is a single page of text dedicated to helping you create your own country/western lyrics. For example, the first line reads, "I met her ___1___ ..." For blank number one, you are given several options to choose from, such as "Outside Fresno, at a truck stop or in a nightmare." Each of the remaining 11 spaces have similar lines to choose from to complete your song. The problem here is that this site is not interactive. It is designed for you to print up and pass around the office or give to your wife, provided you actually have a job or a spouse.

Webmaster: Kevin Laferriere

★★★

HELLO KITTY'S TEA PARTY

http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/

~seenoise/kitty/hellokit.htm

"Are you enjoying your tea and biscuit?" Based on the "Hello Kitty" line of girl toys and accessories, this site is nothing more than a repetitive cycle of choosing tea and condiments and dressing the bear. When you tire of the tea party, which will no doubt be soon after you hit it, link to other sickeningly sweet sites such as the *Lambchop* home page. The tea isn't even spiked.

Webmaster: See the Noise

★★

HUNT THE WUMPUS

http://www.bu.edu/htbin/wcl

In this multiplayer game, the wumpus is a cave-dwelling creature that you are to hunt and kill. The prey is "sleeping" and not visible when you arrive at the site, so you must choose which cave, as designated by number and image, to shoot your "arrow" into. You are only given five magic arrows, so choose carefully. Your risks include: getting eaten, being shot by another hunter or your own ricocheting arrow, shooting a fellow hunter or "getting old" by not moving fast enough. We never saw the wumpus, but we shot ourselves to the death. Good luck.

Webmaster: Glenn Bresnahan

★★★★

JAVASWEEPER

http://www.bu.edu/~aarondf/java/javasweep.html

Mine Sweep is much better with the beta applet for Java. Once the image loads, you can click your way through the game trying to chalk up points, clear space and avoid coffee cups instead of the traditional land mines. You can alter the size of the game board on which you are playing to make it larger or smaller in addition to adding extra deadly coffee cups. A true time-killer.

Webmaster: Aaron Fuegi

★★★★★

MAIL TO A MORON

http://www.ithaca.edu/shp/shp97/pyoung1/moron/

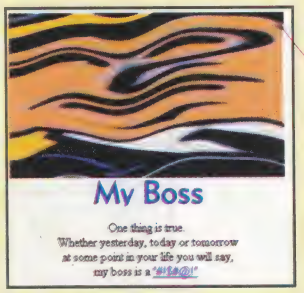
If you truly lack the marginal creativity it takes to come up with a line such as "Do you realize how badly you suck?" or pirate lines from *Star Wars* such as "And now, young Skywalker, you will die," you may consider using this site to send nasty one-liners to your friends. The "Send e-mail to the moron of the moment" page allows you to select a line of text of varying degrees of insult to send to anyone's e-mail address. This site is a total waste unless you can't put a sentence together on your own. Other than that, how was the play Mr. Lincoln?

Webmaster: Pascal Young

★

MY BOSS IS A #!$#@!

http://www.myboss.com/



This site is the Web equivalent of gossiping at the office without the consequences. Let out your employment frustrations anonymously, if you choose, in the form of stories, jokes and one-liners at this page of humorous job gripes and complaints. You can also vote for your favorite stories and submissions contributed by others. The site is mostly textual, and contains numerous anecdotes of boss-related angst and humor. Useful information such as how to be your own boss and find a new job are the more serious items here.

Webmaster: mystory@myboss.com

★★★★

PRIMORDIAL SOUP KITCHEN

http://math.wisc.edu/~griffeat/kitchen.html

Contrary to the title, don't expect to find great recipes here. This site was created by a math professor to display his computer-generated images in random patterns, not his mother's chili

recipe. The prof uses "Garden-variety PCs and dedicated Cellular Automation Machines" as mixmasters for the colorful images he displays weekly. He blames his food-fixation, among other cerebral ramblings, for the unrelated title. The site is mostly eye-candy, but as visual stimulation, it's first-rate.

Webmaster: David Griffeath

★★★★★

TAGLINES GALORE

http://www.brandonu.ca/~ennsnr/Tags/

This collection of more than 59,000 taglines, otherwise known as catchy little slogans that quickly become overused, was compiled by the Webmaster through contributions from the Internet community. Taglines from car acronyms (such as Pinto: Put In New Transmission Often) to book titles are listed in huge quantities. If the primary list of taglines isn't enough, 100 random lines are highlighted each day. A lot of these lines are pretty lame and sound like marketing slogans, but if you look carefully, there are some entries worthy of note. Textual.

Webmaster: Neil Enns

★★★

WEB-A-SKETCH

http://www.digitalstuff.com/web-a-sketch/

Inspired by the famous Etch-a-Sketch, this site is the ultimate procrastination device. You select the size of the space in which you would like to draw and then create a continuous-line illustra-

tion by clicking your mouse. Simple? Not really. Weekly contests and a gallery of entries allow you to study the competition before actually submitting your own work. Luckily, you can erase and restart without shaking your monitor upside down.

Webmaster: Alan Watts

★★★★★

101 HOLLYWOOD BLVD.
http://home.navisoft.com/brewpubclub/101.htm

Ever wondered if you could make it in Hollywood? The creators of Hollywood 101 refer to themselves as "A six-pack of young filmmakers in and out of movies and love." The writers update the site with their filmmaking experiences weekly for the 'net community. They tell interesting stories about their films from concept through final product, dragging along characters they met on the way. Tips on how to act in Hollywood if you want anyone to pay attention to you is an especially good column for newbies to read.

Webmaster: rb1225@aol.com
★★★★★

HEAVENLY CREATURES
http://members.aol.com/grafixgreg/artfotos/images/fotoart.html

Based on the true story of two girls from New Zealand who murdered one of the girl's mother, this fantastic site is a tribute to the film by Peter Jackson. The main index categorizes the features at this site, from the *Heavenly Creatures* FAQ to sound bites from the film itself. Most impressive is the fact that the Webmaster constructed sections that address the real story, not just the events as portrayed in the film. The design is superb and well-organized. This site offers the content and originality many celebrity/entertainment sites lack.

Webmaster: adamabr@helix.net
★★★★★

LATE NIGHT WITH CONAN O'BRIEN
http://www.nbc.com/entertainment/shows/conan/index.html

"Scientists have discovered a Chinese herb that cures alcoholism in hamsters. They're hoping that it will cut down on the number of accidents they have on that little wheel." From *The Simpsons* and *Saturday Night Live* writer to the host of his own (really) late-night entertainment fest, O'Brien's distinct humor can now be found at this off-shoot of the NBC home page. Charming little graphics and a Shockwave movie

are what this site is really all about. Biographical information and "Conan's ideal woman" are two features not to miss.

Webmaster: National Broadcasting Company, Inc.
★★★★

THE NATIONAL FILM REGISTRY
gopher://marvel.loc.gov:70/00/research/reading.rooms/motion.picture/nfpb/nfrnet

It's not flashy, but sometimes information pure and uncluttered can be interesting. In this case, this Gopher site is just a list of films the National Film Registry has chosen to preserve. The public is even encouraged to nominate their own. The movies chosen range from well-known classics such as *The African Queen*, *High Noon* and *It's a Wonderful Life* to more esoteric choices like the Zapruder Film of President Kennedy's assassination and *Blade Runner*.

Webmaster: The National Film Registry
★★★

THE NEVERENDING STORY WEB PAGE
http://www.louisville.edu/~dwhill01/neverending.html

The main character of this story, Bastian, spent his time searching for reality in a world that was very much a fantasy. He began to have trouble distinguishing between the two. This is the perfect Internet story. The Web is Fantasia and you have gotten lost in it. Subsequently, you must "find your true identity in the real world." This site explains *The Neverending Story*, as told in the original novel by Michael Ende, and links to information about the films, from the original German version, *Die Unendliche Geschichte*, to the American rendition created in 1990. Includes links to other similar sites and book/album cover images.

Webmaster: dwhill01@homer.louisville.edu
★★★

NYPD BLANK
http://force.stwing.upenn.edu:8001/%7Esepinwal/formula.html

This short site is the only formula you'll need to create your own highly rated cop drama for network television. You are given the outline and the setup. All you have to do is flip a coin to choose the direction your story will take. The humorous mock-script provided is modeled after the ever-so-popular series *NYPD Blue*. The beauty here is that you don't even need to watch the show to write your own episode as the characters' names and modus operandi are clearly defined for you. Replete with commercial breaks. One suggestion to the Webmaster: use Shockwave so we can thoroughly enjoy the jump-cuts.

Webmaster: Gardner Trask (excerpt from the NYPD Blue Home Page by sepinwal@mail.sas.upenn.edu)
★★★★

THE ONE WHERE THE GANG GOES TO OZ
http://www.ksu.edu/~selene/wizard.html

What the? This site is basically the script of *The Wizard of Oz* rewritten and starring the characters from Friends. We hate to come out against creativity, but reading this treatment was like having citrus juice squeezed directly into an open wound. At press time only a third of the scenes were complete and we're hoping, for once, that the authors don't complete this script. This entire episode redefines insipid.

Webmaster: Nate Trelease and Rachel Stigge
★

THE OUTER LIMITS
http://www.mgmua.com/outerlimits/

Do no attempt to adjust your screen. This graphic-heavy site is an archive for the television series which started in 1963 and is still a highlight of Saturday night TV. A walk through the virtual portals will lead you to the episodes, past and present. A regional television listing will help you determine when *The Outer Limits* is broadcast in your area.

Webmaster: MGM/United Artists
★★★★

ROB REINER HOME PAGE
http://zen.sunderland.ac.uk/~aa4dhu/rob.html

Though he's become more and more mainstream, Reiner's career as a director has included such all-time classics as *This is Spinal Tap*, *The Sure Thing* and *The Princess Bride*. Of course, you probably already knew that, so you'd go to this Web site looking for some original or little-known content. Guess what? You aren't going to find it here. This page is nothing more than a small bio and filmography and some links. Is it too much to ask to have a graphic? Let's see a little effort.

Webmaster: aa4dhu@sunderland.ac.uk
★

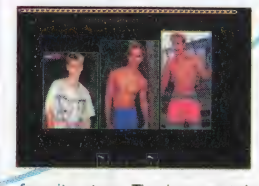
SPOON! THE TICK HEADQUARTERS
http://www.cs.rose-hulman.edu/~stinerkt/Tick.html

We have to admit we were a little behind on this one, but now that we've finally seen some episodes of the Saturday morning Fox series, we're converts. This *Tick* site served as a great introduction into the bizarre world of the cartoon. At press time, the site was still incomplete, but the parts that were fully functional help shed some light on the likes of Die Fledermaus, Sewer Urchin and American Maid. The only problem was that the Webmaster includes links to other people's Tick pages that were more complete. Honesty doesn't win you stars, content does.

Webmaster: Kevin Stiner
★★★

THE STAR GALAXY
http://irian1.iri.tudelft.nl/Star_Galaxy/default.htm

This site is the *Tiger Beat* of the '90s. The Webmaster has compiled more than 350 images of teen idols from tube to screen, mostly male,



in varieties from River Phoenix to Jaye Davidson. In the "discussion" section, fans lament over favored underwear and virginity status of their favorite stars. The images take a little while to load from the mini to the larger version. Not a lot of substance, but a noteworthy photo album.

Webmaster: Addy Hersman
★★★

GG ALLIN UNOFFICIAL HOME PAGE

http://www.bekkoame.or.jp/~puszone/

GG Allin is perhaps best known for being a punk musician who lived by the sword and died by the sword. His intense, violent character is displayed on this Web site that bears a "Watch me kill" heading. The page is black with a minimal number of links to short pages of images, discography and items such as Allin's death certificate and prison ID. This site is readable in English and Japanese.

Webmaster: puszone@sco.bekkoame.or.jp

★★★

CHIP'S CELEBRITY HOME AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES

http://oscar.teclink.net/~chip1120

Only a veteran autograph collector such as the Webmaster of this site would have a celebrity list this long. An extensive list of snail mail addresses for celebrities from Mira Sorvino to Jackson Browne can be found here. The Webmaster gives instructions on how to save face in front of your favorite stars by sending a SASE, checking your spelling and keeping that darn message as short as possible. A limited list of e-mail addresses is also available. The links to autograph resources are worth checking out. Textual.

Webmaster: chip1120@teclink.net

★★★★

PHYLLIS DILLER

http://www.amdest.com/stars/PhyllisDiller.html

The famous comedienne who was once honored with an award for "the tremendous breakthrough in acceptance for our field" from the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery has a Web site biography. This site has only one image of Phyllis Diller, but it's otherwise loaded with information about her career from a late start at age 37 as a mother of five, publisher, writer and columnist in San Francisco to a commedienne of international acclaim.

Webmaster: azdest@amdest.com

★★★

JOHN "JOHNNY BOY" GOTTI

http://ng.netgate.net/~ravenna/gotti.html

Welcome to the tribute page for "alleged mob boss but all-around nice guy," John Gotti. At this site, you can join the Committee to End The Marion Lockdown, the prison John is currently serving a life sentence in, and check out character testimonials from the mobster's cohorts, mob recipes and current news and info relating to Gotti's prison status. This site is

thorough, entertaining and contains some interesting images and fun topics. C'mon guys, after all, how dangerous can a man that says, "All I want is a good sandwich" be?

Webmaster: ravenna@netgate.net

★★★★★

GREAT BALLET DANCERS OF TODAY

http://www.ics.uci.edu/~vara/ballet/carte.html

Mostly a repository of ballet dancer images, this page is very small and contains little information. Commemorative photographs of the American Ballet Theater and modern dancers are coupled with brief captions regarding the style and significance of each individual in the ballet world. The pages are a part of a larger home page unrelated to ballet. The images are sparse, not grandiose.

Webmaster: Vara Ramakrishnan

★

AUDREY HEPBURN HOME PAGE

http://www.osaka-u.ac.jp:8080/-_-http://grove.ufl.edu/~flask/Hepburn.html

"I never expected to be a star, never counted on it, never even wanted it. Not that I didn't enjoy it all when it happened." While hardly as elegant a tribute as one might expect for Audrey Hepburn, who starred in such classics as *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *My Fair Lady*, this site is an expansive collection of Audrey Hepburn images and filmography. A list of Hepburn quotes and descriptions of the actress from other celebrities is included. Other Hepburn sites are linked.

Webmaster: S. Mendoza

★★★★

NASTASSJA KINSKI

http://www2.magmacom.com/~wduford/nasty.htm

This is the site for the German-born model/actress best known for her roles in *Tess* and *Cat People* or perhaps for the famous photograph taken by Richard Avedon in which she is sporting a python. The frames are fairly easy to use with clearly marked icons for the features such as filmography, magazine covers, biography and print articles. Lots of images and professed adoration from the Webmaster exist on these pages.

Webmaster: Wayne Duford

★★★

LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

http://www.obs-us.com/obs/english/books/Mandela/Mandela.html

Based on the autobiography of South African President Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, this Web site is an interesting look at the life of the inspirational leader. Select images of Mandela from his early years in Johannesburg, his incarceration in Robben Island and his release from prison complement the excerpts you will find from his life story. The site is well-organized and content-rich.

Webmaster: twep-webmaster@www.timeinc.com.

★★★★

THE ONO-NET OFFICIAL WEB PAGES

http://www.odyssee.net/~ricjoly/ononet.html

Dedicated to artist and avant-garde musician Yoko Ono, the Ono-net site is a collection of information posted to the site by the Internet community. A complete collection of links to Ono's art, music and writings can be found here. Don't miss the extensive list of images such as album covers and posters to the highlights of Ono's interviews and political activism.

Webmaster: Richard Joly

★★★★★

OUTPOST NETWORK

http://www.outpost.net/spot/cindex.htm

Remarkably similar to an award show attendance list, this site displays a huge directory of celebrities that you can send a personal letter to for a fee of $2.95. Celebs such as Norman Mailer, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Susan Sarandon, Marcia Clark, John Denver and others will, supposedly, receive the mail you send them, once you enter your letter online and submit the form. One more thing. You need to include your Visa/Mastercard number to secure payment for this service. If you would like to hand-sign the letter, the Webmaster will mail you the form for an extra $1.

Webmaster: custserv@outpost.net

★★★★

TOTALLY UNOFFICIAL (BUT HIGHLY ENJOYABLE) GABRIELLE REECE HOME PAGE

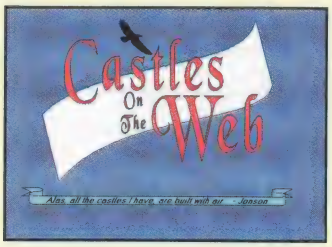
http://www.geocities.com/RodeoDrive/1903/

The Webmaster is unapologetic about his site for volleyball star and model Gabby Reece being totally visual. "To be honest, I just don't have that much information on Gabby," he admits. However, he does a lot of explaining before you get to the image links. Once you are finished reading disclaimers and the like, you can link to page one or two and see several thumbnail images that all appear to have been taken at the same time. Too much build-up and not enough product. The Webmaster should also be apologizing for the heinous background pattern.

Webmaster: alanr@freenet.fsu.edu

★

CASTLES ON THE WEB
http://fox.nstn.ca/~tmonk/castle/castle.html
This is the place for more castle information, images and trivia than you ever imagined existed. In addition to the weighty amount of



content, the design wins accolades as well. The parchment paper look of the Web pages adds a Medieval feel to the site. The castle glossary will help you distinguish between a bivalate and a spandrel. If you're a king, queen, knight or rock star in the market for a castle of your own, the Webmaster even includes real estate listings.
Webmaster: tmonk@fox.nstn.ns.ca
★★★★★

CENTER FOR FINANCIAL WELL-BEING
http://www.ns.net/cash/
These guys really want to sell you a seminar package, but the bits of advice they offer along the way to entice you to sign up are worthy of mention. You can take the "Spending personality self-test" to determine the seriousness of your financial state before you make a commitment to attempting to better your financial status by rushing to a seminar. Little tips to help people from any income bracket are updated frequently. The site is somewhat sparse being mostly graphic-free. Miserly, but moderately useful.
Webmaster: Grady Cash
★★★

CHOMP DER IDOL
http://www.cnw.com/~miki/index.html
Intellectual pursuit is the primary focus here. Philosophy, language and ideas flourish. The Webmaster uses his cyber "spot on the carpet," a metaphor for his existence on the Web, to display class projects and papers. The articles are interesting and thought provoking, however, the design treatment of two-frames split down the middle with the same content on both sides is a pointless attempt at "deeper meaning."
Webmaster: miki@cnw.com
★★★★

EDGE OF CYBERSPACE
http://www.europa.com/~edge/
Edge of Cyberspace is a scientific banquet. The Mystery Cam, microbial mutants, the obsidian wall and the underground links are just some of the sections that you can explore during your journey here. Besides viewing numerous cool images, you can learn about things such as Methyl Sulfonyl Methane and the medical disasters that await us in the arena of airborne disease. "The potential for global disaster is evident, and the question is no longer if, but when." If you liked The Hot Zone, check out this site.
Webmaster: Gary Edge
★★★★★

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
http://www.ild.com/
Spending all of your time on the Internet can be useful. Why not learn another language? French, German, Korean, Japanese, Russian and Spanish language lessons, including grammar, conversation exercises and vocabulary, can be studied on a basic level at this textual language resource. Audio bites in the conversation exercises will help you hear and apply the correct accent to your new dialect. You can receive the first level of lessons in any or all of the languages free once you e-mail ILD for a password.
Webmaster: webmaster@ild.com
★★★★★

THE LIFSCHITZ PSYCHOLOGY MUSEUM
http://www1.netaxs.com:8080/people/aca3/LPM.HTM
Practicing psychoanalyst Marvin Lifschitz and his associates created this virtual museum to exhibit the various facets of psychology in a dynamic and entertaining way. Chances are, if you are having a panic attack, you are not going to have time to check out the symptoms online. But if you should in fact feel you are the victim of an Oedipus Complex, you may want to consult the Freud section in the Museum Rotunda. Mostly textual, very informative.
Webmaster: Marvin Lifschitz, Ph.D.
★★★★★

THE HENRY MILLER HOME PAGE
http://erie.csis.gvsu.edu/~vanoflej/HenryMiller/Welcome.html
The one image on this site may "wow" some of our sensitive readers, but what do you expect from a Henry Miller commemorative site? The most valuable resource here is the list of Miller's writings. A brief biography and a 29-page criticism of Miller's works, written by George Wickes, is also included. This is all

you will find. It would be nice to perhaps include samples of the writer's work alongside the book titles. Just a suggestion.
Webmaster: Jeff Van Oflen
★★

SCREENWRITERS AND PLAYWRIGHTS HOME PAGE
http://www.teleport.com/~cdeemer/scrwriter.html
If you've ever considered writing a screenplay or writing in general, you should not miss this home page. This mostly textual site is an bottomless pit of information from voices of experience, tips from the pros and seminar information to manuals, dictionaries, thesaurus resources and more. Learn how to concept, create, market and sell your writing without spending a dime on manuals and guide books.
Webmaster: Charles Deemer
★★★★

STREET PHOTOS
http://members.aol.com/grafixgreg/artfotos/images/fotoart.htm
The Webmaster is the featured photographer of this site. His black-and-white street photography is inspired by photographers such as Cartier-Bresson, Robert Frank and Gary Winograd. Different

images are posted monthly, dating from the mid-'60s to the mid-'80s. Thumbnail images of each photograph are displayed initially so you can see for yourself what you'd like to look at in greater detail. The links to other photography sites are also worth exploring.
Webmaster: Greg Allikas
★★★★

WEB OF LOST SOULS
http://www.barkerverse.com/
"Forgive my Art. On bended knees I do confess: I seek to please." The official site for Clive Barker features the author's art, books, comics and merchandise and the opportunity to browse and submit classified ads to the collectibles section. Still images from Barker films can be found in the gallery, but they do take some time to load. *Lost Souls Magazine* and short samples of stories are for those interested in literary, not cinematic Barker.
Webmaster: Nicholas Owen
★★★★

WEB OF PROBABILITY
http://www.mrmedia.com/mrmedia/
This may strike you as another Web site created by a weary academic, begging people not to e-mail him with questions regarding the material he has presented, because he just doesn't have time to respond. It is. This textual site is geared toward anyone interested in probability theory. Links to other sites, books, journals, theorists, software, mailing lists and more are included. A miscellaneous section includes probability problems for you to solve, if you dare try.
Webmaster: Phil Pollett
★★★

ADVENTURE CENTER

http://www.adventurecenter.com/cgi-bin/home.exe

"It's about blisters, and roadrash, and the dude with the souped-up Pentium 166 who bypasses traditional media and turns to the net for his daily dose of news and info which keeps his mental and blade wheels going." This site's a massive tome of articles and features about extreme sports. The sports featured here are separated into four categories: Reef, Road, Trail and Peak Guide. Interviews with top solo-sport athletes, sound bites and a search engine for finding what you're looking for quickly are highlights here. You'll find plenty of images, hundreds of articles and hours of fun.

Webmaster: Jeffrey Quade

★★★★★

FEMALE HOCKEY GOALIES PAGE

http://www.lookup.com/Homepages/89887/f_g.html

Manon Rheaume may be the most famous female hockey goalie, but as this page will teach you, she's not the only one. Why anyone, male or female, would purposely put themselves in the path of vulcanized rubber pucks traveling at them at speeds in excess of 100 mph is not answered, however. Instead you'll get the basics plus a handful of photos of the handful of women who patrol the crease.

Webmaster: Sandra Barota

★★

GREAT OUTDOOR RECREATION PAGES

http://www.gorp.com/

From bike excursions through the high Andes to Canoeing in Canada, this site has your adventure. The design isn't very alluring, but the deep well of content makes the rugged search through layers of link sediment worth while, somewhat like trekking through Tibet in search of, who knows? Enlightenment? Anecdotes of outdoor adventures, links to books, resources, equipment and travel information are just the tip of the iceberg. Checking out this entire site is a vacation in itself. Plan your time accordingly.

Webmasters: Bill and Diane Greer

★★★★★

MTB REVIEW

http://www.webcom.com/mtb/otter.html

Before you drop a grand on a mountain bike, check out the MTB Review, a growing database of reviews of mountain bikes and mountain biking accessories and parts supplied by enthusiasts worldwide. In addition to a database of hyperlinked reviews, the site offers up all sorts of off-road news and links. Where else on the Web can you read up on the latest cranks, hubsets and saddles?

Webmaster: Francis Cebedo

★★★★

POLONET

http://www.cts.com/browse/polonet/wip/wip1.html

"The man, the line, the ball." Polo. The Game. In polo, such as life, these are your priorities. If you think polo is just a sport for Englishmen and princes, you are probably right. But this site defines the game as "A team sport played on horseback," with the intent of hitting a ball with a mallet to score a goal. The history of polo, rules of the game and a long list of game tactics will get you in the game in no time. Polo tips, such as the comment, "With eight human brains and eight horse brains sometimes doing 16 different things, talking can glue your game together," make this site an enjoyably lame read. Textual.

Webmaster: polonet@cts.com

★★★

SCOTTIE PIPPEN'S HOME COURT

http://www.clark.net/pub/cardman/pippen/

As you read this, the Chicago Bulls should be wrapping up there quest for the NBA title. So it's only fitting that we point you toward this page that pays homage to the versatile superstar forward. Sure, the site essentially pilfers material from other sources, but what fan page doesn't? The site's FAQ is a hoot: "Question: Are you Scottie Pippen? Answer: No..." Gee, thanks for clearing that up.

Webmaster: Jason Berry

★★★★

THIS DATE IN BASEBALL HISTORY

http://www.connix.com/~lepan/

The title's pretty self-explanatory, but for those who missed the last week's episode, this site will tell you what happened on any particular date in baseball history. For instance, on the day I'm writing this, Babe Ruth had an ulcer operation in 1925 and Roberto Clemente collected his first hit. The entries are hyperlinked when possible for a nice touch. Baseball fans will love this site.

Webmaster: lepan@connix.com

★★★★

JIM THOME

http://www.mit.edu:8001/people/rotcamy/thome.html

Dedicated to the "sweet-swinging, high sock wearing" Cleveland Indian, this is the definitive source of information on Jim Thome. GIFs, statistical updates, articles, pictures of his baseball cards—it's all here. The site's highlight is the original Thome report, a weekly update that manages to be both informative and witty. Yes, the site is a tad obsessive, but as long as the author doesn't pull one of those Glenn Close in *The Natural* deals, we can all relax.

Webmaster: rotcamy@mit.edu

★★★★

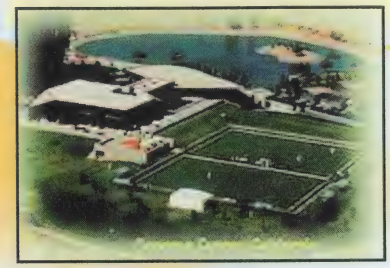
THE WORLD OF CROQUET

http://www.canvest.com/croquet/indexnetscape.shtml

Yet another sport from the family of finely-manicured lawns. Croquet is a game "combining strategic positioning and ball striking," not to be confused with the numerous other sports that could make the same claim. Colorful croquet balls line the side of the home page creating a cute diversion. Links to complete rules, regulations and equipment and images of "lawns" around the world.

Webmaster: Steve Dimond

★★★★



THE WORLD OF TABLE TENNIS

http://smash.paxnet.com.au/~reid/ttennis.htm

Ping Pong, Table Tennis, whatever you call it, this is the site to visit if you're looking for any kind of information on the game at which Forrest Gump excelled. Table tennis, although largely a recreation pursuit in the plywood paneled basements of suburbia in the United States, is a serious sport in foreign ports of call, so you'll notice the pages have a decidedly "overseas" flavor.

Webmaster: Wayne Reid

★★★

RONNIE CRAMER'S MOTORCYCLE WEB INDEX

http://sepnet.com/cycle/

Bikers unite. There isn't a highway on earth bikers haven't traveled at some point in time. Why should we be surprised to see them congregate on the Web. "It is the ultimate way to share your interest in cruisin', performance, racing, chrome, skin art, sports, or the Fall of the Roman Empire." Besides chatting with fellow road warriors, you can check out dealerships, biker films, from *Busty Biker Babes* to *Easy Rider*, equipment, legal issues concerning bikers and organizations. The site is a good balance of text and images.

Webmaster: Ronnie Cramer

★★★★★

TAUROMAQUIA

http://www.clark.net/pub/jgbustam/toros/toros.html

Bullfighting was popularized by Hemingway and Bizet's Carmen, and crosses a fine line between sport and art form. Besides affirming our notion that there's a Usenet group for everything (see alt.culture.bullfight), this site also taught us the difference between a matador and a novillada, the method one uses to kill a bull and where to find bullfight broadcasts in the United States. Links to bullfighting publications such as *6 toros 6* and a review of the '96 season will help you stay on top of the latest news. All of these pages are great, but take a stab at the "Glossary and Primer on Bullfighting," page for the basics.

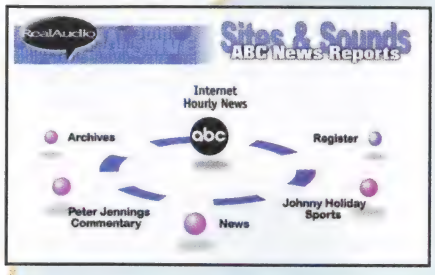
Webmaster: Hispanic Pages in the USA

★★★★★

ABC HOURLY NEWS REPORT

http://www.prognet.com/contentp/abc.html

This American Broadcasting Company site offers Real Audio updates of international and national news every hour, every day. The site requires a free registration, but once you join you can access the news, Peter Jennings commentaries and Johnny Holiday sports archives for stories you may have missed in the past. The home page is well-constructed and



neatly organized.

Webmaster: ABC Network

★★★★★

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

http://www.neog.com/portfolio/suntimes.html

The *Chicago Sun-Times* has long been a favorite newspaper to Chicagoans. The Web site offers online reprints of all features from local, national and international news to their notoriously hefty sports section. The home page is text-heavy, but the links to news sections and columns are clearly defined easy-to-use. Restaurant reviews, Don Crabb's computer column and Roger Ebert's movie reviews are popular features here.

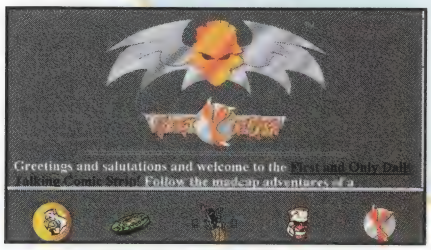
Webmaster: webmaster@suntimes.com

★★★★★

CYBER-CHICKEN

http://www.whoa.ca/

Whoa! Multimedia Entertainment, Inc. created this daily "talking" comic strip parodying cool people and anyone too hip for his or her own good. An "Over-steroidized" chicken, named Cyber-Chicken is the star of this comic strip serial. He "blasts and blunders his way through modern life." Monday through Friday the strip is shown in four panels and on Saturday it's displayed in eight. The preview section allows you to look back to the week's previous



episodes. Cyber-Chicken's wit and wisdom can prove beneficial to you if you dare to check out the online advice column.

Webmaster: Whoa! Multimedia Entertainment, Inc.

★★★★★

DOW JONES

http://bis.dowjones.com/index.html

"Where the Web gets down to business." From the well-known financial index, the most interesting feature at this visually lukewarm site is the custom clipping service the news source offers. News from major business publications, news wires, trade publications and more will be gathered and sent to you via online, fax or e-mail for about $15 per month with limited use. Research and private investor membership services are also available, if the price is right.

Webmaster: webmaster@nrs.dowjones.com

★★★★

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM ON THE INTERNET

http://www.vir.com/~sher/julian.htm

It was the line, "Lost? Frustrated? On deadline?" that caught our eye. This textual site is a virtual dusty library of information you can find quickly and easily. Catering to the immediate needs of journalists or anyone who needs facts in a hurry, this site points you in the direction of your information through numerous links. Story topic ideas and a link to finding sources in chat rooms and in various locations on the 'net make this site worthy of a place at the top of your bookmark list. Seemingly endless, very, very cool.

Webmaster: Julian Sher

★★★★★

N.O.R.M.L. NEWS

http://norml.org/news/index.shtml#fax

The National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws features a weekly news update on changes in legislation concerning marijuana prohibition in the United States. These textual pages link you to the news document that you select from an index. E-mail addresses for the authors of the articles printed are available for you to respond. This source is more than a weekly newslink. Special features and archived information may be obtained as well.

Webmaster: Carl E. Olsen

★★★

N.U.T.S.

http://pwp.usa.pipeline.com/~dantematrix1/

N.U.T.S. stands for "News Update-Totally Screwy." The Webmaster collects news stories from sources around the world, compares notes on the coverage if multiple publications cover a particular story and presents his findings online. The Webmaster's tone is conspiratorial and sarcastic, with strong editorializing of the facts to make his point. The site is textual with unpredictable, yet frequent updates. Just do us a favor and don't believe the bit about "If it's printed on the Web, it must be true," even if it is in jest.

Webmaster: dantematrix1@usa.pipeline.com

★★★

OMRI DAILY DIGEST

http://solar.rtd.utk.edu/friends/news/rferl/master.htmlopt-tables-unix-english-

The Open Media Research Institute publishes this "Friends and Partners" daily guide to news and events of the former Soviet Union and East-Central and Southeastern Europe Monday through Friday. The last five years are archived for reference to an enormous amount of information ranging from news events, language, history studies and commerce reports. This is a text-heavy site that is designed well enough to not look cluttered or dull. Interesting, multinational perspective makes this site enjoyable to read and enlightening.

Webmaster: frnds@solar.rtd.utk.edu

★★★★★

PBS ONLINE

http://www.pbs.org/

"If PBS doesn't do it, who will?" The Web site for the Public Broadcasting Service is an excellent source for daily programming and information. The site is designed with bold images and clearly marked icons, making it easy to find your way

around. You can search by month for television specials, show times, regular series information and regional listings. The home page takes some time to load, but your patience will cash in when you see the final product.

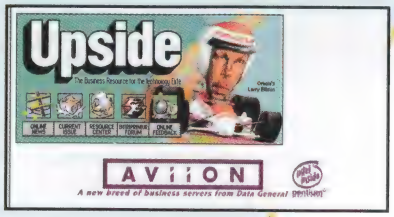
Webmaster: webmaster@pbs.org

★★★★★

UPSIDE

http://www.upside.com/

Deemed "The business resource for the technology elite," this site is nicely composed with a creative icon bar and functional layout. Online news and features relating to current technology issues are well-written and informative. While this site is primarily a 'zine, we have listed it under "news" for its timely updates and value as a technological information source. Opinion



columns and hard news make up the content here.

Webmaster: feedback@upside.com

★★★★

THE WEEKLY PLANET

http://www.weeklyplanet.com/weeklyplanet/

"News Out of This World!" The Weekly PlaNet gathers its news from the Voice of America network and publishes select articles on this site weekly. The sections include international and national news, sports, features, comics, horoscopes, links and classifieds all relating to science and technology. The site is textual, but makes up for the lack of images with salient content and timely, interesting news.

Webmaster: webmaster@weeklyplanet.com

★★★★

THE ART MACHINE

http://www.voicenet.com/~imarco/

You can view this site with Java or without, depending on the capabilities of your browser. The Art Machine is a toolbox filled with textures, patterns and cool pictures for you to decorate your Web site or desktop. Lots of the patterns

are too intense. Some are created in colors that would make Miami blush. If you fill out a form, you can receive free wallpaper via e-mail. From groovy to grotesque, you'll find it all here.

Webmaster: imarco@voicenet.com

★★★

B-WORLD

http://www.well.com/users/btanaka/

"Thou shalt not mistake the Internet for a shopping mall, a dating service or a television with more stations." This excerpt from the "Six Commandments of the Internet" is just a sampling of the content you'll find at the B-World home page. The features here are not limited to the technical side of the 'net. Astute articles that focus on the philosophy of technology make up a majority of the content. Entertaining, too.

Webmaster: Brian Tanaka

★★★★★

BRAID MEDIA ARTS

http://www.braid.com

Web site advice and HTML tips are the offerings of BRAID Media Arts. These pointers are not just run-of-the-mill advice from a couple of guys surfing in their mom's attic. BRAID has created comics, magazine and book cover illustrations as well as CGI climax sequences for the film *Johnny Mnemonic*. Images from their work and numerous links to other design/graphics sites are available.

Webmaster: Rick Berry and Darrel Anderson

★★★★★

OSC YOUNG PERSON'S GUIDE TO THE INTERNET

http://www.osc.on.ca/kids.html

Kids may not be our target audience, but we know that our readers are pretty much just kids in adult clothes. This site, furnished by the Ontario Science Center, is a link feast with some very entertaining and fun resources for the young at heart. From Web Spirograph to pages designed by 7-year-olds, sigh, you are sure to find something to pass the time.

Webmaster: webmaster@osc.on.ca

★★★★

TABLES ON THE WEB

http://www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/Mosaic/Tables/Overview.html

The perplexing HTML table dilemma issue has its own Web site, courtesy of the original creators of Mosaic. This textual tome is filled with suggestions and samples to make dealing with a stash of information easy, universally readable and concise. A link to the official NCSA tables manual is an excellent tutorial if you are just getting started with designing tables for your own site. The links alone are worth the trip to the site.

Webmaster: mosaic@ncsa.uiuc.edu

★★★

TOP TEN WAYS TO TELL YOU HAVE A SUCKY HOME PAGE

http://www.winternet.com/~jmg/TopTenF.html

Perhaps this is where all Web designers should start. "We can only stomach so many pictures

of your pets" and "Your home page consists of a desperate plea for a job," are two of the signs that you need to re-evaluate your content and design, according to the Webmaster. This site is not all criticism. There are some helpful hints. Some simple guidelines to help you construct a successful site are included once you read this list and learn what you shouldn't be doing.

Webmaster: Jeffrey M. Glover

★★★★

INTERNET UNDERGROUND

Visit Underground Online, the webbed companion to *Internet Underground*.

Stories you won't see in the print version.

Music from independent bands.

All the URLs from this issue

Links to hundreds of reviewed Web sites

underground ONLINE

http://www.underground-online.com

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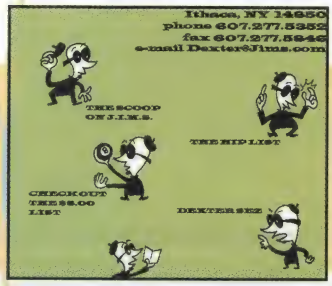
ALIEN SEX FIEND
IGNORE THE MACHINE

IGNORE THE MACHINE
http://www.zynet.co.uk/steelwolf/ignore/
This Alien Sex Fiend band site is mostly textual and includes what is bound to be the world's longest page for you to scroll. The content, including concert information, interviews and new album releases, is updated consistently with music industry news coverage of the band to keep you up to date on their latest activities. There aren't a lot of images here, but you will leave this site knowing more than when you first arrived.
Webmaster: lssmith@glam.ac.uk
★★★★

JIM'S ITHACA MUSIC SHOP
http://www.jims.com/
Webmaster Jim has "hung up his over-the-counter retail" experience to set up an Internet mail order music store. He specializes in hard-to-find CDs with two



categories to choose from, the Hip List and the $8 List. Brief descriptions of each album, new or old are listed with the title and price. The site is mostly textual, with the exception of a Beatnik cartoon figure named Dexter, who is your virtual "salesperson." The site is a good source for rare albums, saving its face for being a commercial site.
Webmaster: Jim Spitznagel
★★★★

LARK IN THE MORNING
http://www.mhs.mendocino.k12.ca.us/MenComNet/Business/Retail/Larknet/larkhp.html
While it is nice to learn about what kind of stuff exists on the Web, it is also nice to be able to find out where to get it. This site offers musicians the opportunity to locate rare musical instruments, music and instructional materials. Whether you're interested in the pennywhistle and Irish flutes or bones and spoons, Lark has them all in a full-color display you can order from.
Beyond the commercial purpose of this site, we found the numerous articles on instrument care and maintenance to be interesting and useful.
Webmaster: larkinam@mcn.com
★★★★★

LUPO'S PUNX PAGE
http://home.earthlink.net/~crash/
This site is the ambitious effort of Lupo, a.k.a. Sonik, a high school student in Berkeley. Lupo has devised a massive stash of links to the subversive side of the Web. The danger here is that if you pick up all of his bread crumbs along the way, you could end up far from home. Numerous listings of punk record labels, bands and 'zines can be found here, including a Lupo invitation to join the punk IRC. The graphics are hip and fairly quick to load.
Webmaster: Lupo, a.k.a. Sonik
★★★★★

LYRICS PAGE
http://archive.uwp.edu/pub/music/lyrics/
Another useful addition to the Web. Now you have a solution for being troubled by lyrics that you used to know and can no longer remember. Three database search options are available to locate the song line you are stumped by. Search with keywords from the body of the song, by artist or title or by selecting the first letter of an artist's or group's name. We gave the search engine several lines we thought were obscure and the site responded with the correct answers. We did, however, manage to stump the site with the line, "A really fine pair of shades means everything," from "Shades" by Iggy Pop.
Webmasters: Michael Herf, Dave Meltzer
★★★

MADNESS IN MY SOUL
http://cs.caltech.edu/~bryan/roxy/roxy.html
Roxy Music, Bryan Ferry and Phil Manzanera are grouped at this site for an '80s musical feast. A complete discography will help you determine which albums you really want to repurchase, only this time in compact disc format. Lyrics, images, books about Roxy Music and independent projects

and interviews are all available or accessible through the site. "More than this," you can also sample audio files and hop on the Avalon mailing list while you're here.
Webmaster: Bryan Chow
★★★★

THE UNOFFICIAL AIMEE MANN HOME PAGE
http://www.sky.net/~btcreel/aimee.html
The multi-frame layout of the site dedicated to female vocalist Aimee Mann is a strong combination of content and images of the former 'Til Tuesday singer. Besides the discography, sound clips and articles, the Webmaster has included in the photo gallery original images of Mann that he took during concerts. The days of harassing a fan club coordinator or talent agent to be noticed by your idol are over. Just design a good Web page and hope he or she notices.
Webmaster: Brian Timothy Creel
★★★★★

MC 900FT. JESUS
http://american.recordings.com/American_Artists/mc_900FT_Jesus/mc_home.html
Mark Griffin, the given name of the musician behind MC 900ft. Jesus, has a Web site dedicated to his jazz, hip-hop and experimental electronic tunes. The site contains video and audio clips of his recording ventures and a brief biography of the man behind the music. Not surprisingly, there is no link to Oral Roberts, the original "900-foot Jesus."
Webmaster: Greg Siegel
★★★

OFFICIAL HOME PAGE OF NAPHOBIA
http://www.magicnet.net/~nphobia/
"Creating twisted tunes designed primarily to crush listeners into parallel dimensions of extreme brutality," is the modus operandi of the band Naphobia, for whom this site was created. The site features animated album cover art, audio bites, images and links to other metal bands and related sites. The odds of you being able to clearly read all the content through the intense background patterns are slim, but not impossible. Somewhat like your chances of surviving a plane crash.
Webmaster: Nik Chevalier
★★★

THE OFFICIAL NO DOUBT
http://www.hallucinet.com:80/no_doubt/
The unusual thing about this graphic-heavy site is that the band No Doubt wants pictures of you, the fans, for their home page. Aside of that, the images of the band itself are cool, but large. They take quite a while to fully load. Biographies of the band members are brief, with more emphasis on pictures than information. The discography is limited, due to the relative newness of the band. It's pretty hip, but cautiously trendy.
Webmaster: Orange Curtain Online
★★★

TANGERINE DREAM HOME PAGE
http://www.public.iastate.edu/~hunter/TD/tngdrm.html
This home page is loaded with useful information about the band that has appeared on numerous movie soundtracks and in various musical genre for

years. An exhaustive list of everything that ever hit vinyl, tape or plastic is accessible. A lyric link, movies and the ubiquitous fan club info section can also be found here. It's not the prettiest page we've seen, but it has personality. And personality goes a long way.
Webmaster: Scott A. Miller, a.k.a. "The Hunter"
★★★★

DAR WILLIAMS
http://www.panix.com/~tneff/dar/
Female folk-vocalist Dar Williams' site is a treasure cove of links to healthy and organic food sites, sound bites and album information. Most everything you want at this site "is available" should you choose to

order it. If you are willing to spend some cash, Dar will deliver the world on a cyberplatter. A brief history of the musician and press releases and sounds from Dar's duet with singer Joan Baez are buried deep within the salesspeak at this site.
Webmaster: Tom Neff
★★★

AMERICAN ELECTRONICS ASSOCIATION

http://www.aeanet.org/

AEANET is the home of the American Electronics Association on the Web. Since 1943, this organization has been a watchdog of technology and electronics. The Internet is at the forefront of the technologies highlighted on their Web site. The AEA has a section dedicated to public policy and up-to-date technology news, as well as publications and conference information. Textual with numerous links.

Webmaster: Webmaster@aeanet.org

★★★

FREE STUFF

http://www.zdnet.com/pccomp/filters/free.html

Some of this stuff is free. Some is shareware. Learn the difference. From games and recreation to practical programs and multimedia tools, this site is filled with useful stuff. Everything from Envoy to 3-D underground dogfights are combined at this site. Although playing Mah Jongg with your computer seems less social, it is a good way to hone your skills before you join the Joy Luck Club. This site is a textual library of links to some outstanding stuff on the 'net.

Webmaster: webeditor@pc-computing.zd.com

★★★★★

MICROCHIP YOUR PET

http://www.vicnet.net.au/vicnet/community/dog/chips.htm

A stray link from the Australian shelter for lost pets home page, the product described here is the Trovan microchip. This 20mm X 2mm chip is inserted between the shoulder blades of cats and dogs so that they may be identified and returned to their owners. The microchips contain the dog's description and the owner's name and telephone number should the animal become lost. The site is a textual and a quick read. Microchips in animals? What's next, humans? You have to wonder.

Webmaster: lostdogs@vicnet.net.au

★★

SPA INTERACTIVE

http://www.spa.org/

The home of the Software Publishers Association and an excellent source for software industry information for students, business people and anyone who uses computers with any regularity. You can join the organization free for the first year by filling out a form online. How will this benefit you? Well, it will keep you abreast of changes in the computer industry and probably put a little more e-mail in your virtual mail slot. Topics covered here include government affairs, research and anti-piracy issues. Mostly textual with lots of tables.

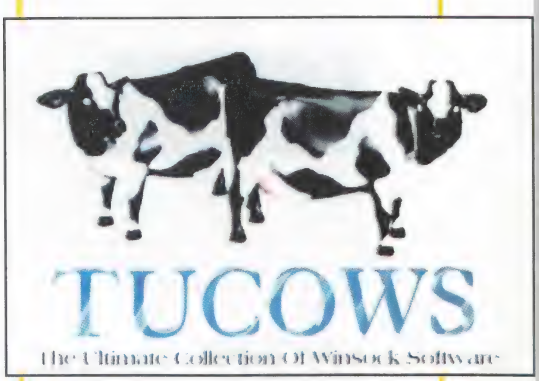
Webmaster: webmaster@spa.org.

★★★★

TUCOWS

http://www.tucows.com/

This site basks in its self-proclaimed fame as



"The Ultimate Collection Of Winsock Software," or TUCOWS. After locating the mirror-site closest to your location, a "What's new" link will allow you to quickly locate and download the latest available plug-ins, shareware and freeware. An enormous listing of all items and applications available at the TUCOWS site is displayed alphabetically for quick reference. Mostly textual except for the cow images.

Webmaster: Scott A. Swedorski

★★★★★

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ALR ADVOCATE

http://www.concentric.net/~chocker/

"Where nothing is sacred, and neither are we." *ALR* is a melting pot of commentaries and articles about pop culture and contemporary society. This 'zine is a collaborative effort of several writers and an artist who want to be making

publications full-time, but have to make ends meet. The content is blunt and unapologetic in its accusations and insinuations. *ALR* also changes its design structure with each issue, so don't get too comfortable with any look and feel. Worth checking out is the short, but accurate new CD review section.

Webmaster: chocker@concentric.net

★★★★

CLOCK RADIO

http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jayd/

Characterized as the "Interactive e-zine that will wake you up," this eclectic publication is updated daily. You can expect to find computer humor, audio CD reviews, classifieds, links, poetry and prose that are totally random and unrelated. The site has a few cartoon graphics and some loosely constructed articles, however, for the most part, it's on "snooze."

Webmaster: Jay Dougherty

★★

ESSENCE

http://wabakimi.carleton.ca/~emcgann.index.html

This 'zine is the product spawned of a personal journal and a college publication, all written in lowercase type. The site is mostly textual and contains stories and insight about feminism, love lost, awkward moments in adolescence and many more very short, mildly entertaining self-reflections. Episode 13, the current issue, is also a paper publication. Some articles from past issues are available. Most notable is the fact that the Webmaster is a 'zine distributor and offers to help you blanket the earth with your own publication.

Webmaster: Erin McGann

★★

GUILLOTINE

http://www.cipsinc.com/jack/guillotine.html

"Strictly for the heads." Brooklyn 'zine, *Guillotine*, is a quarterly online publication dedicated to hip-hop and urban life. Sections

include an editorial titled "PI.M.P.", for Public Image Made Possible, "Poetics" including poetry and the mother lode of hip-hop music and band reviews. A gallery of exceptional images of graffiti art can be found under the icon "Tuff Times" in the Tunnel Vision section. "The inner eye and outer sight of hip-hop and life itself."

Webmaster: Sha-key

★★★★★

KGB MEDIA

http://www.kgbmedia.com/

KGB 'zine is a great online source for a variety of features focusing on the media and pop culture. Weekly interviews with celebs of sorts, such as Geraldo Rivera and Sy Sperling in one issue, are well-composed and decked out with cool graphics. The music section contains interviews, sound bites and critical reviews of new releases. This site has a terrific amount of content, varied, interesting and layers deep.

Webmaster: David Heller

★★★★★

NEW FRONTIER

http://www.newfrontier.com

The New Frontier, a bi-monthly newsstand publication, in existence for 16 years, is now spreading its new-age consciousness on the Web. At the site, you can read the current newsstand issue or browse the back issues in their entirety. Interesting images can be found about crop circles, alien abductions and paranormal experiences. The columns include features written by prominent new age philosophers and authors such as Deepak Chopra.

Webmaster: newfrontier@a-o.com

★★★★

OFFbEAt

http://www.sfgate.com/offbeat/

"Arts and events from San Francisco...and beyond." OFFbEAt's calendar of events is updated weekly, highlighting events from art exhibits, theater performances and online happenings to utterly useless but entertaining bits such as the "Name Yourself Day" entry we found. The design is fun and functional, but in some spots, busy. OFFbEAt is not just art for arts' sake. The features are unconventional and witty, with purpose. The featured artist link is an excellent resource.

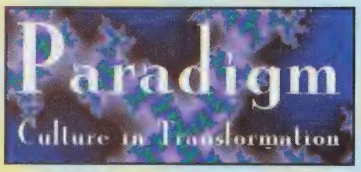
Webmaster: Lex Lonehood

★★★★

PARADIGM

http://members.aol.com/para93/paradgm.htm

"Engage your spirit of exploration!" As the 'zine of "Culture in Transformation," *Paradigm* makes Web wanderers hunt for featured articles, stories and art. The features have new-age themes with an edge,



addressing magic, mushrooms and metaphysics. Also included are political commentaries and links to related Web sites. Updated monthly.

Webmaster: para93@aol.com

★★★

SCIENCE-FICTION WEEKLY

http://www.scifiweekly.com/

The weekly source for sci-fi enthusiasts. *Sci-Fi Weekly* is a great-looking site that includes interviews, news updates, gaming information and book reviews of current sci-fi releases. The site is well-designed, simple and easy to navigate. The creators of this site have excellent resources and link to top sci-fi spots on the Web.

Webmaster:70334.2433@compuserve.com

★★★★★

SMOOTH

http://ucsu.colorado.edu/~boltax/

"The Web is like a swordfight, you must think carefully before you make your first move." This is true. But the claim that *Smooth* is the only Web 'zine to bring "distortion, sleaze and revelations" to the 'net is left open for discussion. We do agree that this Boulder, Col., 'zine has quite a bit to offer. Live interviews via CU-SeeMe are a highlight. The articles are interesting and well-written, but all good things come to an end with the Boulder Nights soap opera.

Webmaster: Jonathan "Cybersmooth" Boltax

★★★★★

WELCOME TO THE BOMBSITE

http://www.bombsite.com/bombsite.html

The Bomb is online. The 15-year-old, quarterly, not-for-profit newsstand publication "dedicated to the words and voices of artists, writers, filmmakers and performers on the cutting edge of arts and letters and culture," displays outstanding features from about 48 contributing editors nationwide. The Web site is remarkably designed and easy to navigate. Archived issues are avail-

able with a complete index to point you to the links you want to review. There is so much here to see, you'll just have to check it out for yourself.

Webmaster: Ms. Miranda Dempster

★★★★★

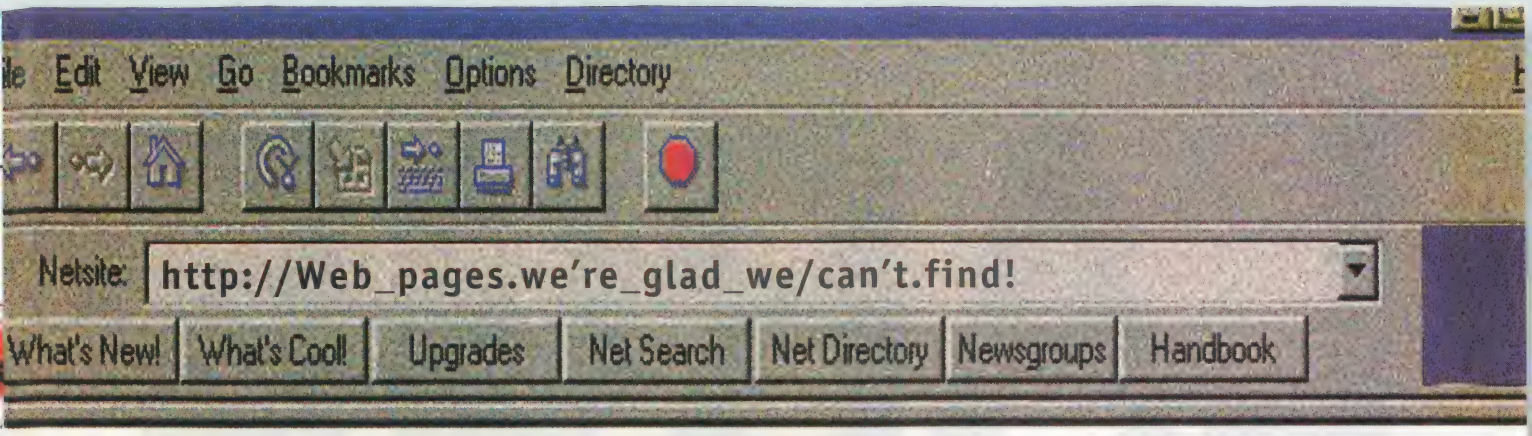
YGDRASIL

http://agora.rdrop.com/~igal/ygdrasil/

This monthly literary and poetry 'zine is the product of contributing writers around the world. Their goal is to make literature, old and new, accessible to people everywhere through the Web. You can download issues of the publication dating back to May 1993 in various formats from basic text to Hypertext. Ygdrasil offers a selection of stories and poetry from their own literature collection and numerous links to relevant literary sites. Textual.

Webmaster: Igal Koshevoy

★★★★



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The Intellectual Collection - Show off your mental prowess with links to collections of Yeats, the MIT lab and University of Chicago FTP sites.

Be a Beatnik - This amazing collection of hotlinks to the works of Ginsberg, Kerouac and the like.

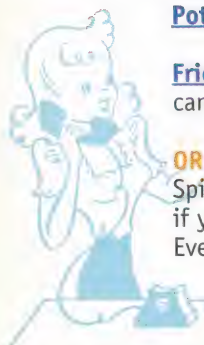
Hacker Hotlist - Link to *Phrack, 2600* and many more! (Comes with special alternative-spelling dictionary, absolutely free!)

Subversive Sublist - Works well with the beatnik or hacker lists. Link to Noam Chomsky shrine sites and the complete Unabomber's manifesto.

Search Engine List - Help out visitors to your page with a list of search engines. They'll thank you.

Netscape Extensions - So what if you just stole someone else's code? Make them think you're technically hip with this list of where to download the latest Netscape plug-ins. (Note, all are accessible through the Netscape home page.)

Potpourri - A completely random set of 10 links.



Friends - If you have no friends, we'll put together a list of five people who have Web sites whom you can call "your friends" and link to their sites! They'll all link back to your page, too!

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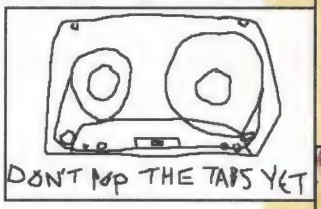
AT LARGE

by Mirsky

The big hoaxes on the Web get all the attention, as you can see from Bob King's article on deception in this issue (page 26). However the little lies, the small falsehoods should not be overlooked. I've listed a handful here, but if you search around, you'll find more:

Sites dubiously displaying the Top 5%
Have you ever wondered about those lame sites showing the Top 5% icon? Oh sure, they're everywhere, but they have some threshold of quality that frankly, some sites don't seem to have crossed. Hmmmm. Maybe we should be searching the Pointcom site a little harder to see if they're all deserved...

CRUPPER SCUPPER SUPPER UPPER and the FLUPPERDUPPER MALEATORA page
http://www.wpi.edu/~nreville/crup/crup.html
An unknown college garage band with some of the worst artwork online. Why would over a 100,000 people come to visit? A sub-page explains the all-too common reason why: "You see, this page used to be linked up to an introductory page. Blue text on a blue background, it listed every obscenity we could think up, as well as various other topics. This meant that anybody searching for pornography. . ."



Oracle Review
http://www.oraclereview.com/
I looked and looked and looked. But there is nothing here from the point of view of bras, which was sort of surprising since the page announces it offers "A unifying voice for women with breast implants and their supporters."

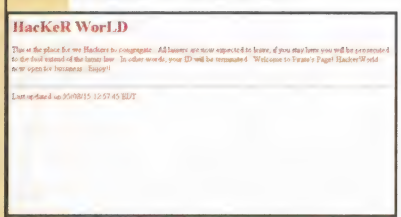
The Who's Cool in America Project
http://www.getcool.com/~getcool/
You can sign up here to be listed as "cool." However, doing it proves you are the exact opposite. I would actually consider this a large hoax, but I don't think self-esteem is as important as everyone says.

Joan Cornish's Quilts
http://www.soros.org/tcornish/jlcquilts.html
Don't let yourself get duped by the deceptive title, "Joan Cornish's Quilts." The three-sentence page ends with these two: "She's churned out some pretty cool work—as you can see from what's here. Except that there's nothing here since I don't have the photos scanned yet. Oh well."

Secrets to Speed Seduction
http://home.earthlink.net/~xotic/fast.html
This "book" supposedly has a section on seducing women on the Internet. Anyone who thinks there are "secrets" to romancing women on the Internet would seem to know nothing about it. Plus, I'm sure this woman would really fall for some pick-up lines in an AOL chatroom.

Internet Psychics
http://www.infohaus.com/access/by-seller/INTERNET_PSYCHICS
Maybe I'm hardened, but I seriously doubt the ability of anyone to read my fortune over the 'net. They can't even see my palms. This place gave the *Internet Underground* staff a reading that talked about frogs.

HacKeR WorLD
http://pages.prodigy.com/Hell/cgzd99a/
Sometimes the person being tricked is the author himself. Here is the entire page, which contains no links at all:



you can check out Mirsky at his Worst of the Web site at http://mirsky.turnpike.net/wow/Worst.html

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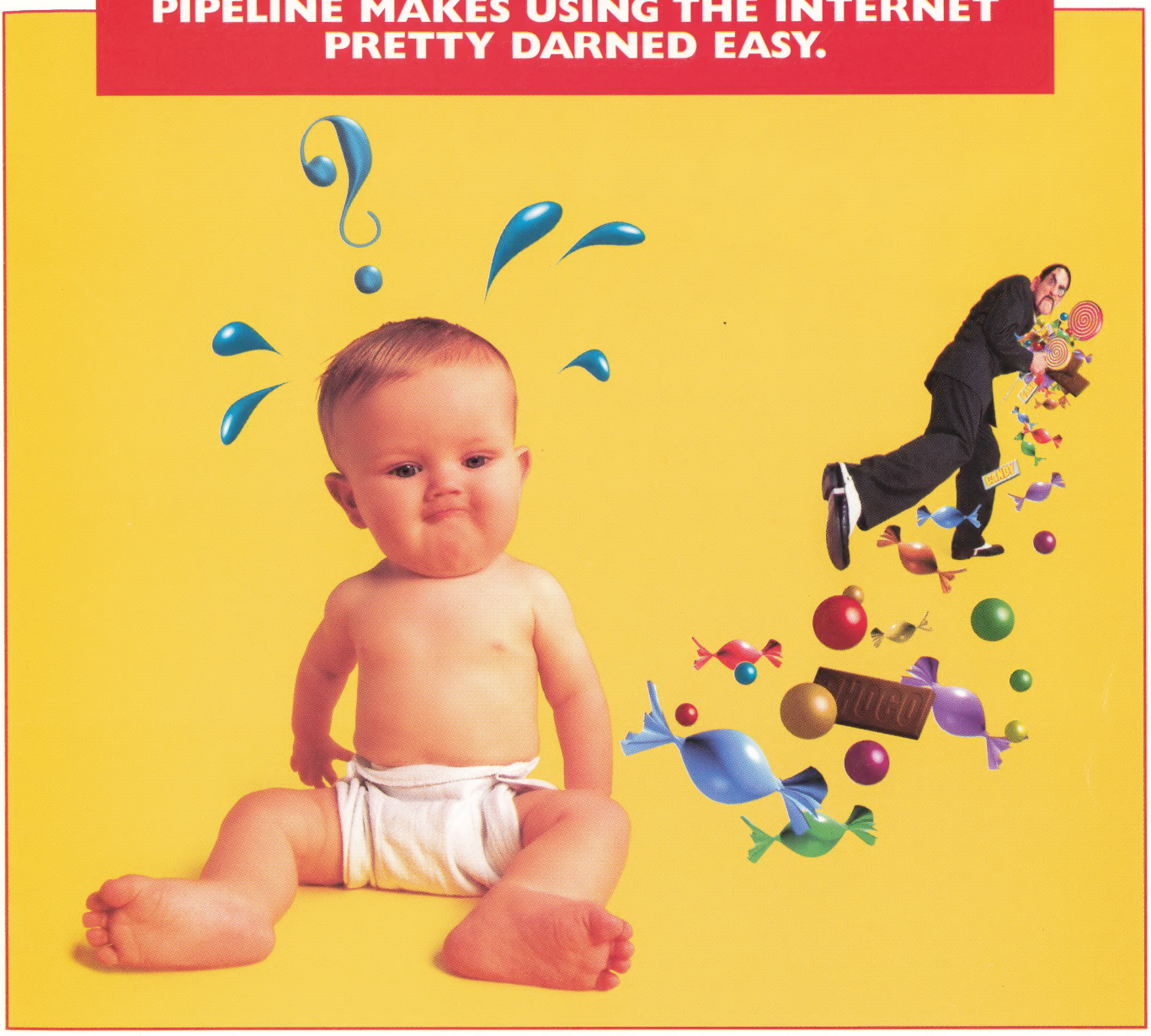

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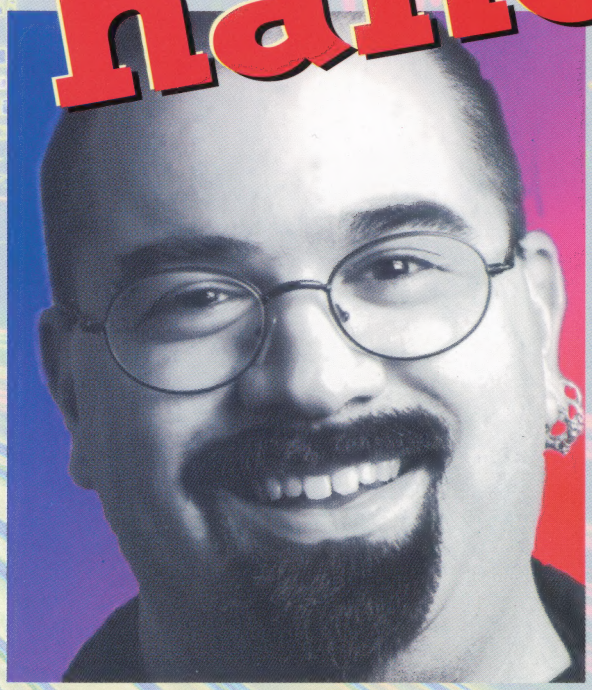

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